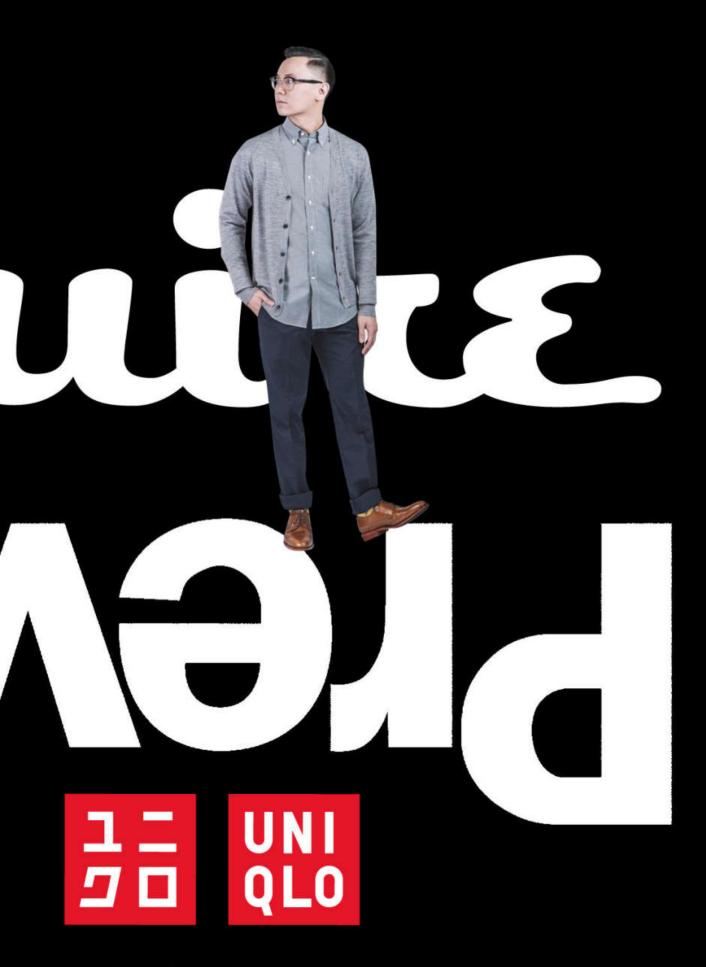


### STYLE AT ITS BEST





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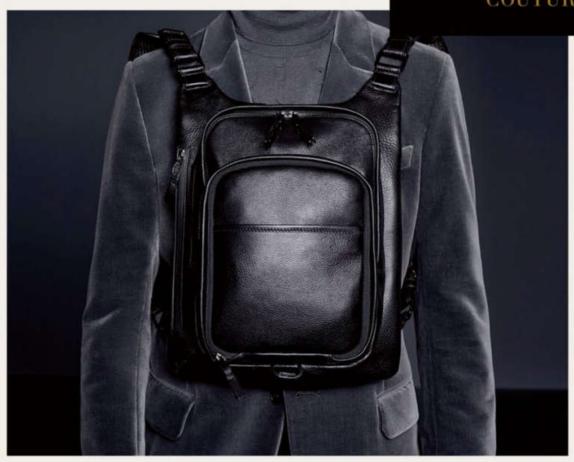


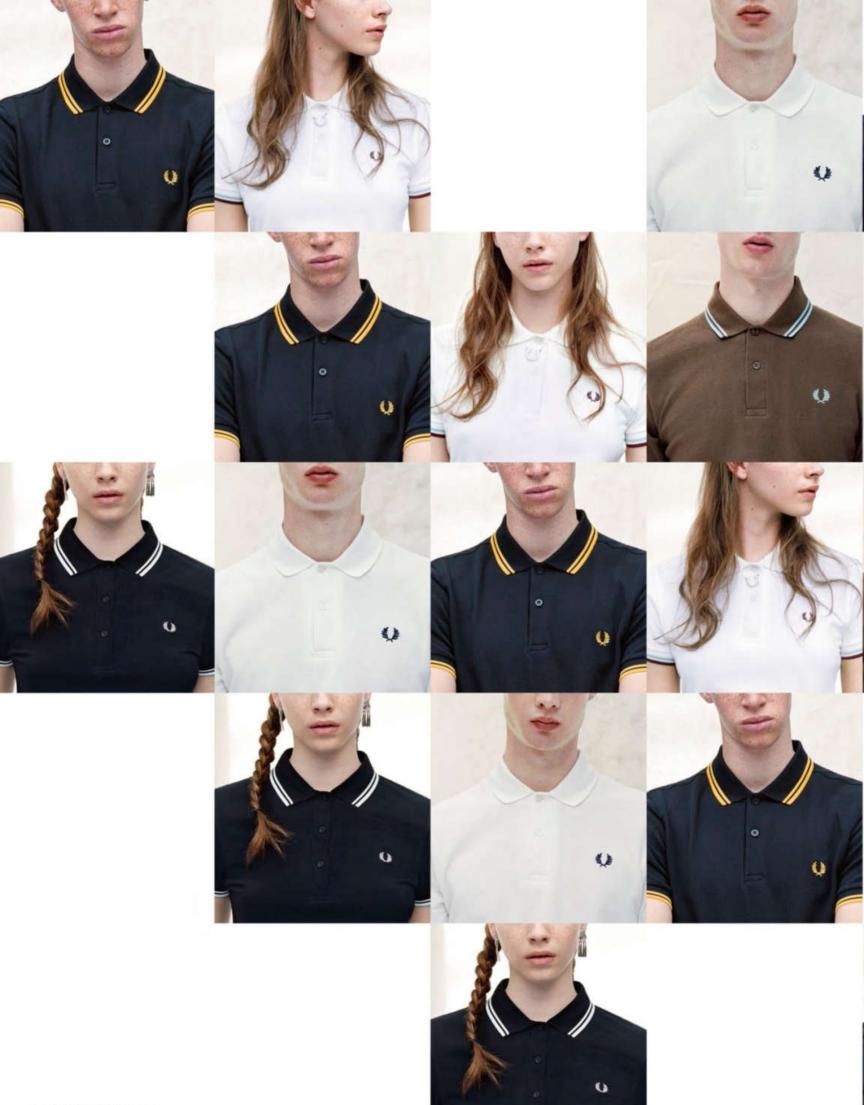


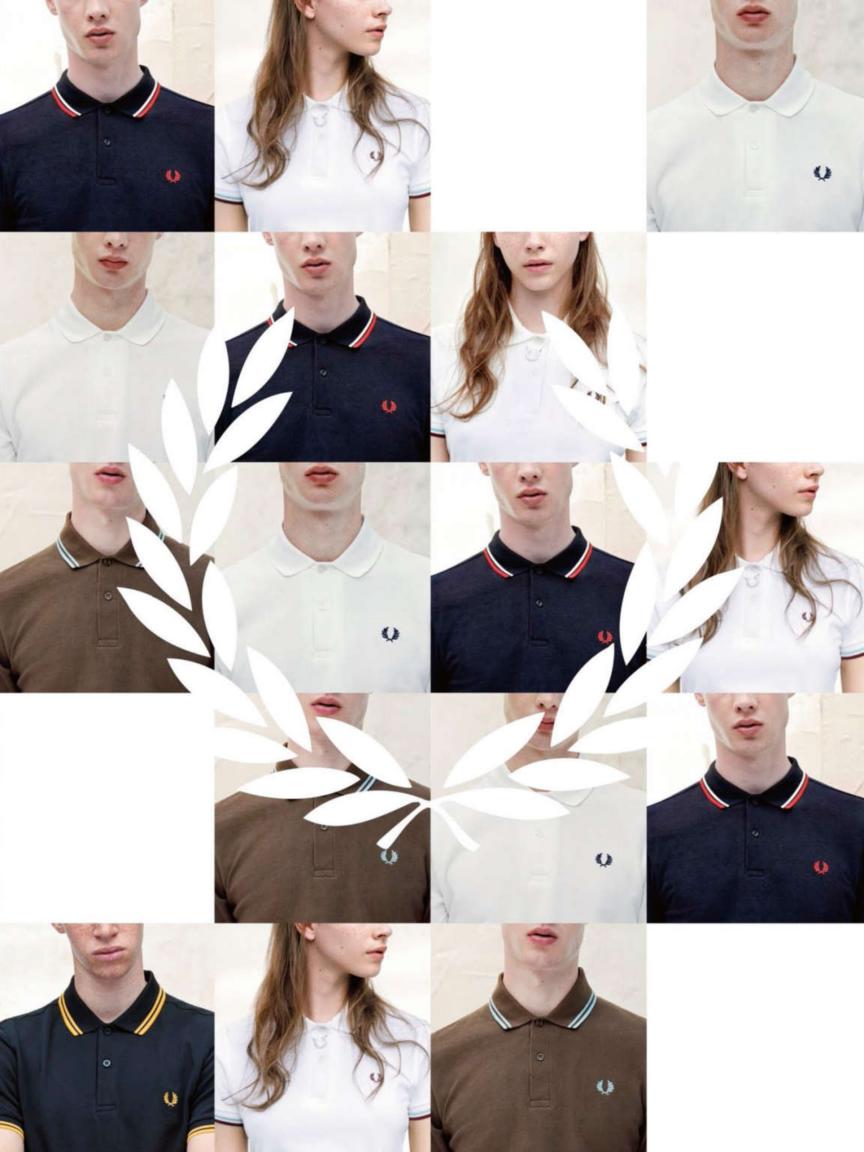
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A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# Alive at the Witch Trials



More than forty years ago this month—September 21, 1972 to be exact-Ferdinand E. Marcos signed Proclamation No. 1081 and put the entire Philippines under Martial Law. No president before him had ever done it and many at that time doubted he would, despite all the rumors circulating that such an act was imminent. Even his archrival Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., who by then had become Marcos' most vocal critic and had warned that military rule was in the offing, wasn't fully convinced. If anything, the senator from Tarlac was unsure if the chief executive, the man he was aiming to succeed in the elections the following year, had the balls. But Marcos had been planning it for some time, some say even as far back as when he was first elected to Malacañang in 1965; enough time to grow a pair, so to speak. It was unprecedented, but he had always thought of himself as one who set precedents, not just follow them. And so it came to pass, on that fateful date, he would sign the document and alter the course of history.

Then a funny thing happened: We forgot. It isn't uncommon now to encounter people who look back on the Martial Law years with sentimentality or even fondness. Especially for those who were born long after EDSA 1, that era has seemingly acquired the patina of some golden age when laws were obeyed, the crime rate was low, the prices of goods were cheap and everyone was happy in the New Society that Marcos had made.

On social media, we see widely shared articles that enumerate the number of roads that were paved, schools that were built, and bridges that were erected during the late president's 20-year reign—so-called evidence of how glorious it all was. Even though there are many still alive today who can dispute or clarify the context of these claims, the era of Martial Law has become so remote to us that it has become suffused with the potent glow of myth; one not so easily dispelled by something as inconvenient as the truth.

Then again, maybe it's not so much that we've forgotten but rather that we've chosen to forget.

If you tolerate this, then your children will be next.

This issue of Esquire is about many things, but it is also about having a sense of history. The stories contained in these pages are not just about the past, but about why it still matters today, why we still need to be reminded of acts of bravery, and to know the substance of those who have started revolutions by taking up arms or the pen.

It always pays to look back. Those with a future always do.

- ERWIN ROMULO

Frunt. Ranto



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### DIESEL



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## DEBENHAMS

Life made fabulous

### **AN ICON REIMAGINED**



Over the years, The Manila Hotel has intricately transformed its grand ballroom, the Fiesta Pavilion into a luxurious realm, adding more flexibility and more functionality in response to the increasing demand for smarter spaces as the capital city prepares to host global events.

"Truly, the opening of the new Fiesta Pavilion of the Grand Dame marks another triumph in this gracious white and green stucco building where Manila's heart, its dreams, romance, and history all live within its walls," said Nian Liwanag-Rigor, AVP for Public Relations and Corporate Communications.

Positioned as the true heart of the Philippines, The Manila Hotel is the country's premier five-star and flagship hotel. It is located at One Rizal Park, Manila. For more information, call 527 0011 or visit www.manila-hotel.com.ph; follow The Manila Hotel on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TheManilaHotel and on Twitter @ManilaHotel and Instagram @manila\_hotel.

1. The Manila Hotel's President, Atty. Joey Lina formally leads the ceremonial toast; 2. The Chairman of the Board, Basilio C. Yap, assisted by The Manila Hotel's Executive Vice President, Dr. Enrique Y. Yap, Jr., leads the lighting ceremony to officially launch the Fiesta Pavilion; 3. Asia's Nightingale, Lani Misalucha belts out a powerful performance on stage to entertain the crowd; 4. The Manila Hotel's new Fiesta Pavilion; 5. Former first lady Imelda Marcos graced the event; 6. The Manila Hotel's Board of Directors: Director and Executive Vice-President Dr. Enrique Y. Yap Jr., Chairman of the Board Basilio C. Yap, and Vice-Chairman Dr. Emilio C. Yap III; 7. The Ceremonial Toast: The Manila Hotel's President Atty. Joey Lina, Resident Manager Mr. Gerhard Doll, Director Benjamin C. Yap, Director & Corporate Secretary Atty. Francis Gaw, Vice Chairman Hermogenes P. Pobre, Chairman of the Board Basilio C. Yap, Vice Chairman Dr. Emilio C. Yap III, Director & Executive Vice-President Dr. Enrique Y. Yap Jr. and Michael Y. Yap

# A FEAST FOR THE SENSES

Eastwood City invites all foodies to an artistic gastronomic celebration to witness food artistry at its finest at the launch of its Food Artistry campaign at the prestigious Eastwood Richmonde Hotel.

"Eastwood City has always been known for its dynamic dining scene and its chef-driven restaurants. With this campaign, we are inviting diners to experience food artistry at its finest and try new dishes that really capture the essence of a chef, which is to create masterful and extraordinary dishes that can please both the eye and the palate," said Megaworld First Vice President and Commercial Division Head Kevin L. Tan.

Dubbed Eastwood Food Artistry Exclusives, these masterful creations handcrafted and intricately prepared by Eastwood City's topnotch chefs will be available exclusively at participating Eastwood City establishments starting August.

For more information on Food Artistry at Eastwood City, call the Megaworld Lifestyle Malls Concierge at 709-9888, 709-0888 or 0917-8380111.



1. Chef Hideaki Tohyama and Chef Ben Gon of Sandaime, who whipped up the Volcano Roll: deep fried spam maki topped with cream cheese, capsicum topped ebiko, spring onions, tencuts, and a special sauce; 2. Lemon Cheesecake and Triple Chocolate Cheesecake by Chef Gregory Guy of Cheesecakes by Guy; 3. Chef James Torres of Potts Point Cafe, who served fried mushroom risotto balls against a creamy and flavorful tomato puree and a pesto puree; 4. Mushroom and Kale Paella by Chef Robby Goco of Green Pastures; 5. Chef Avi Shani of Bar Dolci, who prepared a delectable tequila rose gelato; 6. Brisket Sisig Taco by Chef Chiloy Santos of Kettle.

# **Man at His Best**

SEPTEMBER 2015

ESQ&A / Gastro / Cars / Sex





ESQ: When I was about to watch Heneral Luna, sabi ko "Oh my god, I'm gonna watch a historical film!" And then, in the last 20 minutes of the film, I knew he was gonna get killed-I'm not spoiling it for anybody... דנ: Oh yeah well, *nasa* historical books naman.

ESQ: Pero naka-ganun talaga ako (covers mouth). "Oh my god, don't be stupid!" So how did you build that suspense? And what version of Luna's killing do you believe? Is it the version in the film?

דנ: Well, yung first question tungkol sa creative process, yun yung nahihirapan ako sagutin. 'Di ko alam! (laughs) Kasi it's a combination of editing, fading, my horror background siguro. Di ko masagot yung mga ganitong, "Paano kaya naisip?" Yung number two, karamihan naman kasi nung film nakabase siya

dun sa libro ni Dr. Vivencio Jose, which is The Rise and Fall of Antonio Luna. Binase ko dun yung fact na he had more than 30 bullet wounds, tapos nung patay na siya pinagta-taga pa rin siya.

ESQ: So, just knowing this bit of history actually... it just adds to the frustration of being a Filipino and being caught in this cycle of betrayal. Was that how it felt when you were writing?

JT: Yun naman yung point eh na parang cycle siya, na paulitulit, na kahit nung pre-colonial times pa, meron na tayong history of betrayal.

ESQ: Do you consider this a big departure from your other films?

JT: Hindi naman, kasi as much as possible gusto ko iba-iba talaga yung ginagawa ko. Career peg ko si Steven Soderbergh, so iba-iba sana.

ESQ: Kung siya yung career peg

mo, sino yung life peg mo?

JT: 'Di ko alam. (laughs) Life peg? 'Di ko alam, basta ang balak ko lang ano, make enough movies and get out.

**ESQ:** To where?

JT: Ewan ko. Maybe balik sa pagiging musician.

**ESQ:** Like early retirement? What's this?!

JT: 'Di ko alam, basta make enough movies tapos at some point, ayoko na.

ESQ: Can you see it? Can you see the saturation point?

JT: 'Di ko lang mabilang kung ilan pa. Pero nararamdaman ko na.

ESQ: Oh my gosh!

JT: Darating yun. Ever since naman pagtingin ko lang sa sarili ko parang musician na na-sideline sa pelikula. Kaya nga pag palaging pinapa-explain sa'kin yung filmmaking process, palagi kong ginagamit na analogy yung music. Kasi medyo frustrated ako na hindi ko natuloy yung musical aspirations ko. Di ako pumupunta ng mga gig kasi naiinggit ako sa mga banda.

ESQ: You have a band?

JT: Wala na. Palipat-lipat ako dati ng mga banda. Meron ako dating band from high school hanggang college 'ata. As in heavy metal.

**ESQ:** What? You? Heavy metal? JT: Yes. (laughs) As in mosh pit and whatever. Kinareer ko yan, may double pedal ako, ripped jeans. Hanggang ngayon heroes ko pa rin ang Pantera saka Nine Inch Nails.

ESQ: So that's still your favorite music?

JT: Well, comfort music ko Nine Inch Nails.

**ESQ:** Comfort music? So what stopped you from being a musician?

JT: Ewan ko, nung mid-college



### ESQ&A

### Ang tendency nga ng Filipinos is to build things, group together, and then pagdating dun sa peak mag-fo-fall apart.

naisip ko na kaya kong gumawa ng pelikula. Although nung grumadweyt naman ako trabaho ko talaga composer, arranger.

MaHB

**ESQ:** But would that have sufficed, yung pa-compose-compose lang, pa-arrange-arrange, if you truly loved music?

JT: Well, minsan oo, kasi pag tinetreat ko nga yung filmmaking as music, hindi ako na-fu-frustrate masyado. Kasi halimbawa pag nagsusulat ako, para siyang composing sakin. Nung pinlot ko yung structure ng Luna, nakamusical staff siya. Yung high emotional point corresponds to a high note. Okay, dito boring na 'to so kailangang taasan, taasan. Kahit yung mga sinusulat ko ngayon ganun pa rin ako magplot, para siyang staff.

ESQ: Amazing. And would it also have a beat? Because Hitchcock would also talk about his movies in that way.

JT: Sa editing yun lumalabas. Or minsan, may mga certain scenes dun sa Luna na nung shinushoot namin, parang alam ko na yung music na ilalagay ko. So parang sinasabi ko, "Oops, teka, bagalan niyo pa yung camera kasi yung music na tumatakbo sa utak ko di pa tapos." Kung pwede ko lang kantahin... May isang scene si Mon Confiado na naka-ilang takes kami kasi hindi pa natatapos yung music sa utak ko.

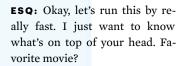
ESQ: Galing! So again, what's stopping you from being a fulltime musician?

JT: Kasi pag nag-music ako, sobrang enjoy lang siya na... sobrang selfish. Nung nag-college ako, hindi Music yung first course ko, Agribusiness Management, for two years. Tapos wala 'kong ginawa nung two years na yun kundi ibagsak lahat ng mga subjects. As in bagsak lahat halos. And then nung lumipat ako ng Music, bigla 'kong naging scholar. As in uno lahat ng mga subjects ko. Dun ako na-guilty, kasi sobrang nage-enjoy lang naman ako, parang feeling ko hindi ako nag-aaral. As in, wala lang, fun lang siya. Tapos wala 'kong binabayad na tuition,

so parang nakaka-guilty siya.

ESQ: Oh my god ikaw yung rejection junkie or something? What's going on?! (laughs)

JT: Hindi naman. (laughs) Feeling ko lang dapat mas may pakinabang pa yung ginagawa ko, hindi lang para sa'kin. 'Pag film, I'm trying to at least contribute to "cultural growth."



JT: Hindi ako nagsasawang balikan ang Se7en, Taxi Driver, saka Silence of the Lambs.

ESQ: Career peg?

JT: Well, nasabi ko kanina, si Soderbergh, and then pwede rin



Game of the Generals. Tarog on the set with lead star John Arcilla, and the rest

**ESQ:** It sounds like the same thing. I mean, making music and making movies.

JT: Mas primal kasi yung music e, ang tao sa loob ng kuwento mas madali silang nag-e-evolve, not in music.

**ESQ:** That doesn't take away the fact that it's still art, and it's a language... it's still a story.

JT: Pero para sa'kin, mas may naco-contribute ako 'pag nag-stay ako sa pelikula.

**ESQ:** It also sounds like you're just not allowing yourself to be happy.

JT: Masaya naman ako. Kasi the fact na nakakapag-contribute ako, dun ako masaya. At least 'di lang ako pa-banda-banda and whatever... That's not to say na lahat ng mga nag-babanda... Ang tingin ko lang 'pag ako mismo personally na nag-focus ako sa music, medyo selfish siya.

**ESQ:** Because you feel happy.

JT: Siguro, ewan ko.

**ESQ:** Is that why you're still

JT: (laughs) Masyado akong nage-enjoy sa pagiging single, promise. Masyado akong masaya.

si Woody Allen, na one film every year... kung kaya. So far napanindigan ko naman.

ESQ: Favorite Woody Allen movie?

JT: Bullets Over Broadway.

**ESQ:** Soderbergh movie?

JT: Kailangan ko pang pag-isipan. Ang dami e. Hindi movie e, gustong-gusto ko yung The Knick.

**ESQ:** Actually masyado akong stressed dun, so di ko siya matapos-tapos.

JT: Sobrang nagustuhan ko.

**ESQ:** Favorite TV show?

JT: The Wire. Nasa altar na siya e. Parang wala ka nang ibang magagawa.

**ESQ:** Actually. Is there anything better than The Wire?

JT: Muntikan nang umabot yung Breaking Bad.

**ESQ:** I was wondering, when I finished watching Luna, I just felt so bad. I love Paglilitis ni Bonifacio, and then this, and then Bayaning Third World. Bakit lahat ganito? Laging may takeaway. Is there a consciousness to always impart something?

JT: Usually sa mga pelikula ko, tinatry kong mag-insert ng some observation about Filipino culture. Kaya ko siya ginagawa kasi I always believe na yung pelikula, para siyang cultural healing, and the first step toward healing is identifying the disease. So yun yung tinatry ko, parang i-identify mo yung disease ng kultura ng Pinoy. Sana hindi siya pretentious pero ayun... So sa Luna, ang dami niyang in-identify na sakit. Sa Confessional, na-tackle ko na dun yung regionalism. And sa Mangatyanan yung pag-commodify ng kultura. Sa Senior Year, medyo ganun din, regionalism. I think that's my main preoccupation, na kanya-kanya tayo dahil by default, geographically speaking, watak-watak talaga ang Pilipinas e. So yung logistics pa lang of forming a country based on 7,000 islands, mahirap na siya in the first place.

**ESQ:** The issue of regionalism is something that you're so successful portraying.

JT: Hangga't may avenue, ipapasok ko siya. And kaya 'ko na-excite sa Luna kasi based siya dun sa libro ni Dr. Jose and also sa libro ni Nick Joaquin, A Question of Heroes, tapos meron siyang sinabi dun na ang tendency nga ng Filipinos is to build things, group together, and then pagdating dun sa peak, mag-fo-fall apart. Ganyan yung feeling ko rin, so natuwa ako kasi finally sobrang solid yung source material, sobrang swak siya sa agenda ko.

**ESQ:** So apart from this psycho horror movie you're writing, what else are you doing?

JT: Tina-try naming i-adapt yung Mythology Class ni Arnold Arre. Si Jade Castro yung co-writer. So sana matuloy siya. And then meron akong mga ibang nasa agenda ko na hopefully magawa ko siya.

**ESQ:** Yeah, don't stop making movies.

JT: Hindi pa. Pero kasi nakikita ko sarili ko na parang mapapagod ako dito eventually. Hindi ko alam kung mayaman na'ko by that time, pero kung mauna yung pagod... whatever.





# It **Takes Two** to **Taco**

**BY ALYANA CABRAL** PHOTOGAPHS BY GABBY

this taqueria a must-visit.

Taco Vengo shows what it takes to dance the tacofusing traditional Mexican flavors with Asian cuisines.

What makes a really good taco? Is it the type of meat or the quality of the tortilla? Should it have a soft or a hard shell? Should it conform to authentic Mexican standards, or does it matter at all? As the age-old "Mexican authenticity" debate of street tacos goes stale, a taqueria nestled in an alleyway in the heart of Kapitolyo called Taco Vengo, proves that in order for a taco to be a showstopper, it really just boils down to good flavor.

A quick glance at their menu would make you think they were offering the ordinary: a choice of chicken, beef, pork, shrimp, or tofu as the protein star of your dish. But it will only take one bite of their freshly made, piping hot tacos, with the juices streaming down your fingers, to convince you otherwise-as the flavors, both familiar and surprising, begin to play symphonies in your mouth. Begin with their chicken taco, which is served





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The soul of the food can be tasted in the homemade ingredients—the unique tortilla blend, the soft shell made from fresh ground corn, the guacamole mush side dish, and the habanero hot sauce.

with a generous amount of kimchi, to have an idea of what this place is about. The unassumingly delicious combo serves up a punch that is sweet and spicy, stupefying your taste buds. Then go for the juicy and super soft pork taco made with cheek confit, which keeps well the gelatinous parts of the pig, making every bite sublime and sinful. Topped with chicharon bits, the play of contrasting textures is enough to make you roll your eyes with delight, as you lovingly munch on the brittle bacon cheek, allowing the little bits of jelly fat to melt on your tongue.

If you want something more stripped down, the steak taco is spot-on. Careful not to bastardize the quality beef, their steak taco is cooked perfectly to medium-well, and is rubbed with an orange chipotle glaze, paired with a chimichuri sauce and topped with grilled pimiento and onions.

Wash everything down with a refreshing mojito, or a cold bottle of beer, and it feels like a nice summer day. Then end your meal with their signature dessert, the chwaffle: a waffle fried with churro batter, coated with cinnamon and sugar, and then topped with a scoop of vanilla ice cream and dulce de leche. It's sickeningly sweet and tasty, you don't mind gorging on one alone.

The soul of the food can be tasted in the homemade ingredients—the unique tortilla blend, the soft shell made from fresh



The chwaffle: a hybrid of a waffle deep-fried in churro batter and topped with ice cream and dulce de leche.

ground corn, the guacamole mush side dish, and the habanero hot sauce.

Hands-on life and business partners Ted Manotoc and Abigail Sy are the masterminds behind the homey little restaurant, which is actually constructed in a refurbished container van. "Tacos really spoke to us," says Ted. "It has so much potential, yet at the same time it's so accessible." Rather than pressuring themselves to achieve the authentic

Mexican flavors, Taco Vengo's food evolves by taking off from different inspirations, making their tacos one of a kind, leaving a lingering craving that makes you want to come back almost every day of the week. And don't be surprised if you do.

16 United St., Kapitolyo, Pasig. Open every day except Mondays, from 12 n.n. to 3 p.m., and 6 p.m. to 12 m.n.

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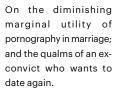
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Sex with Stacey Woods





My wife only used to be able to orgasm from missionary, and now she only can when she's on top. Did something change down there?

I haven't been down there in a while, but there've been no reports of suspicious activity—no unauthorized comings and goings or anything. If it'll make you feel better, I'll put a man on it.

Of the six expert-offered reasons for your wife's sudden erotic relocation, all are disturbing and one is also disheartening. It seems that age, excess weight, childbirth, or any combination thereof-I don't know what you guys get up to over there can change the shape of the vagina and its environs. "Things have had a lot of pressure on them and have been kind of stretched out," says Dr. Shireen Madani Sims of the University of Florida College of Medicine. "A little bit of the bladder

can hang down into the vagina, the uterus sits down lower in the vagina, the position of the clitoris can change slightly." I'll let you take a minute with that before I relay that sex therapist Vanessa Marin thinks it's possible your wife had never had an orgasm until she was on top and has merely been lying to you for ages. "She might have been faking it in the beginning and used the excuse that she needs to be on top as a way to avoid having to be honest." But I don't think your wife's an outright liar, because I'm an outright liar and she's never at the meetings. Whatever the cause or causeswhich, says Kate Thomas, clinical sexologist at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, can also include "lack of arousal" and "lack of focus"—I urge you to rein in this behavior before it gets worse. First she can come only on the bottom, then on top, then on yachts, then with hockey players. We all know how it ends. Allow her a maximum of two or three future positions to get off from, and one or two more holes.

Why am I so comfortable having real sex with my girl-friend when Skype sex weirds me out?

### READER QUESTIONS WE WON'T BE ANSWERING THIS MONTH

- How do I experience sexual ecstasy with a top-notch lady if I don't want to do too much work?
- → Do all women come? Because I haven't found one I can't make come.
  - Please, sir, suggest some special foods through which I can regain the power I've lost during intercourse.

After reading your question over many hours (for future sentences, should you write any, please know that a well-placed comma and a whereas can save everyone a lot of time), I assume that you're asking why you like real sex (or "sex," as it was known before the revolution) better than masturbating across various multimedia platforms to the delight of onlookers, and that is unfortunate. We're sorry to see you go, but mostly we're just hurt you didn't like the online option. It just saves everyone so much trouble down the line-fewer resources, less stress on the infrastructure, etc. And anyway, like it or not, Skype Sex (trademark pending) is a skill you're going to need going forward. My figures estimate that by 2050, 95 percent of you will be too fat to move, so let's get started. Janet Ross of InternetModeling.com, the modeling agency for models who appear exclusively on webcams, suggests you and your intended engage in a "fantasy hour-long text message to warm each other up," which sounds like an awful lot of typing, so make sure to stretch out and carbo-load before and probably after. When you go live, says Ross, "don't start [writhing around nude] from the get-go. Ask about each other's day." Ten seconds later, when that peters out, she says, "talk about the text experience you had with each other: What did you like about it, what didn't you?" I guess you can try that, but I've seen your work, and I think you should have some other stuff prepared. If you still find you must carry on having sex in person, please proceed cautiously, wrapped in as many prophylactic barriers as possible. And please don't fall too far off the grid. Drop us a Vine now and then and let us see how it's going. 12

Got a sex question of your own? E-mail it to us at sex@esquire.



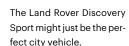
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### Land Raver

BY JASON K. ANG



The thrill of driving a Land Rover comes with maneuvering the vehicle through impossible terrain and unforgiving conditions. In other words: daily driving through Metro Manila. The Range Rover combined such capability with the ride and interior of a luxury sedan. Then came the Range Rover Evoque, a crossover wagon designed purely for on-road pleasures. The Evoque is certainly a hit, but brand purists were aghast at the prospect of a front-wheel drive car wearing the Land Rover badge. The Discovery Sport combines all their best traits, in a size and shape that is ideal to urban living.

It helps that the Discovery Sport looks discreetly handsome. If anything, the Discovery Sport's exterior design is a greatest hits package from the Land Rover catalog. The sleek profile and sharply raked windshield is from the popular Evoque crossover. The grille and long wheelbase place it as a relative of the Discovery. Then there's the tall stance and substantial wheels, which go back to the original Land Rover, the Defender. Well-executed details abound, like the complex headlamps, integrated fog lamps, and the engine guard peeking from under the front bumper.

The interior follows the same combination of straightforward design with innovative use of materials. The dashboard looks deceptively simple and workmanlike, but the luxury is in the details. There's genuine brushed aluminum, not shiny plastic, on the door and console panels. The panoramic glass roof is ideal for stargazing on a clear night, with a power-sliding cover deflecting the heat in the daytime. The eight-inch touchscreen display allows access to vehicle and audio functions, including wireless phone connectivity and audio streaming.

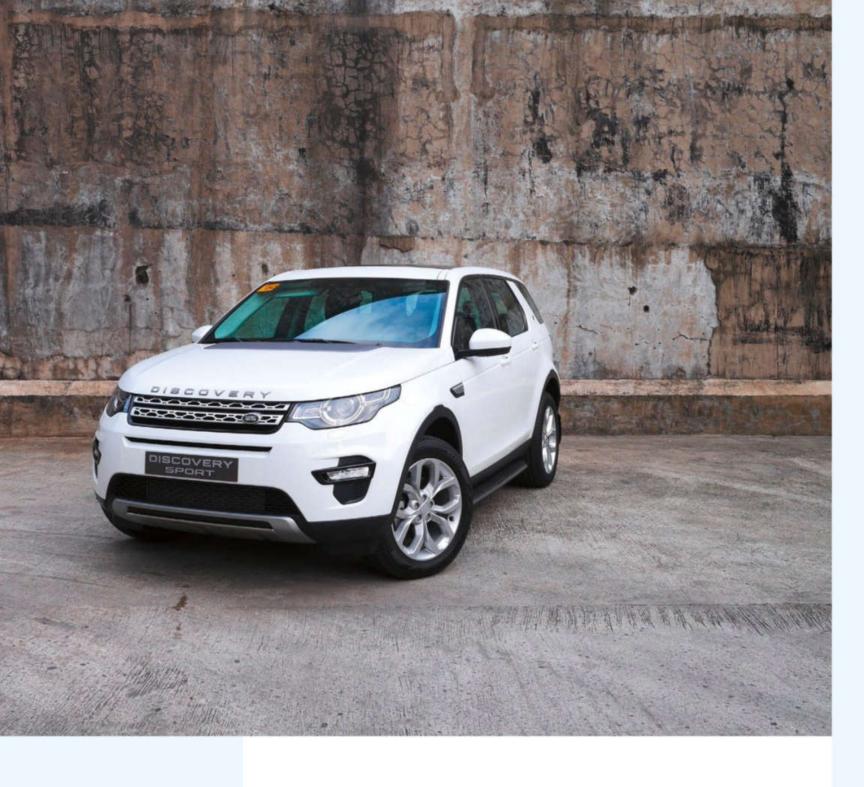
True to its name, the Discovery Sport's primary mission is as a family vehicle. It seats seven, in a five-plus-two configuration. The first and second rows provide ample legroom and kneeroom for adults, while kids can fit comfortably in the third row. The third row manually folds flat into the floor, to convert the rear into a spacious luggage area. The second row can also fold flat for even more cargo space, and can also slide forward to provide more legroom for the third row or for long objects in the back.

Initial price aside, running the Discovery Sport



may actually be a practical proposition. Under the vehicle's hood is a 2.2-liter diesel engine. Providing seamless shifting is an automatic gearbox with nine (yes, nine) forward gears. The abundance of gear ratios maximizes fuel economy, with the car starting in second gear in normal conditions, for example. The nine-speed also benefits performance, with a subtle kickdown always a prod of the foot away. There's also a pair of paddle shifters for quick manual access to any gear. The Discovery Sport comes to life via pushbutton starter. This causes the rotary gearshift to rise from the center console. Necessary? No, but it's certainly dramatic.

The Discovery Sport's engine remains nearly silent in all conditions, its diesel rumble barely making itself felt. Except where it counts: with a robust 420 Nm of torque, the engine makes quick work of accelerating the vehicle.



Ride is a strong point of the Discovery Sport. The car's build is rock solid, with heavy door panels producing solid thunks with every door close. The platform feels rigid, with potentially sharp bumps filtered out before they reach the cabin.

Handling, on the other hand, is agile, with the suspension feeling taut. The driver doesn't feel the car's tall ride height from behind the wheel, thanks to that responsiveness. When it's time to step out of the car, only then is he reminded of the car's high ground clearance.

The green Land Rover logo on the Discovery Sport isn't just there for show. The vehicle comes with the Terrain Management System that allows the car to tackle all sorts of rough roads and even unpaved terrain with relative ease. Buttons on the dashboard switch the vehicle from on-road mode to one for gravel and grass, and yet another for mud ruts. The different modes change the en-

gine and transmission response to allow the car to crawl more effectively. The only feature lacking for true off-roading capability is a low-speed transfer case.

The Discovery Sport carries a full complement of electronic safety features. These include torque vectoring, which helps keep the car on the driver's intended course, and even autonomous emergency braking. There's also one neat feature: an electronic wade sensor, which displays how deep the water is outside the car. This helps take out the guesswork when having to cross deep water, particularly at night or during poor visibility conditions. The water-resistance of the Discovery Sport is helped by the high air intake, mounted above the wheel arch. Land Rover also tested the car after being parked with the doors opened. Even with the interior flooded for 30 minutes, the Land Rover could be driven away.

### READY, GET SET, SERVE!

The world's best female tennis players gather in Singapore for the BNP Paribas WTA Finals Singapore presented by SC Global





#### 23 October - 1 November, 2015

Singapore Indoor Stadium, Singapore Sports Hub www.yoursingapore.com/wtafinals

From 23 October to 1 November 2015, expect heart-stopping rallies, high velocity serves and jaw-dropping trick shots when Singapore once again plays host to one of the most exciting tournaments on the globe.

In the ultimate finale to an inspiring year of tennis, the top names of women's tennis will gather to compete in the BNP Paribas WTA Finals Singapore presented by SC Global, a prestigious tournament that stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the most exhilarating tennis championships in the world.

#### **WORLD-CLASS ACTION**

Held at the Singapore Sports Hub, the 10-day sport entertainment spectacle is your best chance to watch the mesmerising talents of tennis giants up-close, such as Serena Williams and Maria Sharapova, as they compete for the prize of US\$7 million. This makes

"I can't wait to return to Singapore to defend my title. Last year was my first time visiting Singapore and I really enjoyed myself — the crowd is amazing and I'm excited to be going back."

 Serena Williams, on being the first to qualify for WTA Finals 2015 the WTA Finals the crown jewel of the women's tennis circuit.

Aside from the main event, tennis buffs can also catch amazing plays from past tennis legends, such as Martina Navratilova and Arantxa Sánchez-Vicario, as well as see up-and-coming talents at the WTA Legends Classic and WTA Rising Stars Invitational. And, with a live in-arena DJ adding to the pumping atmosphere of the event, WTA Finals is already shaping up to be THE tennis event of the year.

To make things extra special, look out for the first-ever **Singapore Tennis Evening** at Marina Bay Sands on 30
October — where fans will see tennis royalty alongside award-winning
UK singer Paloma Faith, who will be performing in Singapore for the very first time.

#### **BEYOND THE COURTS**

Between the high-calibre matches, tennis fans and visitors alike can also enjoy the outdoor **Fan Zone**, which will feature interactive games and sports challenges. Fans will also get a chance to discover the stars' preparation secrets at the players' practice sessions, and perhaps even score meet-and-greet opportunities.

There is something for everybody beyond the thrills of centre court, so don't miss your chance to brush shoulders with the biggest names in tennis.



The elite eight of WTA Finals 2014 with the coveted Billie Jean King Singles trophy against a background of Singapore's iconic Gardens By The Bay



With every match feeling like a final, players such as Maria Sharapova bring their A game to the WTA Finals

Singapore turns 50 this year and you are invited to join in the celebrations. There are a slew of exciting flight, hotel, dining and retail deals lined up just for you, so there is no better time to visit the Lion City. For more of what's in store in Singapore, check out www.yoursingapore.com/goldenjubilee.

The players shown are for illustrative purposes only. Qualification and participation subject to WTA rules. Images courtesy of WTA





### STYLEAGENDA



#### A WORTHY HEIR

Converse debuts the all new Converse Chuck Taylor All Star II, a contemporary adaptation of the exemplary Chuck Taylor All Star silhouette, for the first time overflowing with innovative Lunarlon technology to support the always-on creative lifestyle. The Converse Chuck Taylor All Star II is ready for more, boasting the most recognizable exterior attributes of the original Chuck Taylor All Star. Details include the unique white foxing, rubber toe-cap and statement All Star patch, while dialing up the features and benefits to deliver a comfortable and versatile premium sneaker for Chuck Taylor lovers the world over.



#### **HIGH IMPACT**

Ten years have passed since **Hublot** unveiled its first Big Bang: the Big Bang Gold Ceramic. In spring 2005, Jean-Claude Biver, now President of Hublot and President of the Watch Division of LVMH, along with his team, led by Ricardo Guadalupe, the brand's CEO, created this new Hublot model—a starting point for a new collection. And how far they have come since 2005. The Big Bang, now the brand's signature collection, has met with phenomenal success. A perfect illustration of the Fusion concept so dear to Hublot, the iconic design of the award winning BIG BANG, now a watchmaking icon, this year celebrates its 10th anniversary. For Baselworld 2015, Hublot is celebrating the 10th anniversary with three new Big Bang models: a new version of the Big Bang Unico, Big Bang Full Magic Gold, and Big Bang "10 Years" Haute Joaillerie.

#### **SEEING RED**

Launched to mark the 130th anniversary of **Victorinox**, I.N.O.X. establishes a new industry standard for watch strength and resilience. The superlative all-terrain timepiece is now evolving into Victorinox Swiss Army's core collection—first with blue, black and green models, and now with **I.N.O.X. Red**.

I.N.O.X. embodies the quintessential values of Victorinox's most famous creation, the original Swiss Army Knife: authenticity, strength, quality, Swiss savoir-faire and Swiss design. It pushes these qualities to the extreme by enduring 130 strength tests, a ruthless battery unparalleled in the watch industry. I.N.O.X. will survive, for example, a ten-meter



drop onto concrete, temperatures from -57° to + 71° degrees Celsius, attack from all manners of corrosive products, a one-minute exposure to a 1,200° degree Celsius flame, and being driven over by a 64-ton tank. The watch's performance, hailed by the world press, has garnered it a host of international awards. It's this resilience coupled with its dashing style that makes the I.N.O.X. a truly worthy timepiece.

#### **GLASS HOUSES**

If glass had the consistency of dreams, what form would design take? This is the challenge that led FIAM to surprise visitors again with its new products at the Salone Internazionale del Mobile (International Furniture Salon): making glass a pure creative material. Among them is the Aura showcase, a creation of Patrick Jouin that exalts transparency and lightness. The glass becomes ever more

fluid and ethereal, for an object which paradoxically has the function of guarding and protecting. The edges, smoothed by nimble extruded aluminum uprights, trace the boundaries between interior and exterior, while the absence of a defined perspective exposes the showcase to viewing from any angle. Its shelves and walls are made of 8mm fixed glass and 6mm curved class, while its base is done in matte black lacquered wood. The Aura's profiles and feet are done in matte black lacquered aluminum. For more information on the Aura and a look at FIAM's furniture, visit Furnitalia at 30th Street Corner Rizal Drive, Crescent Park, West Bonifacio Global City.

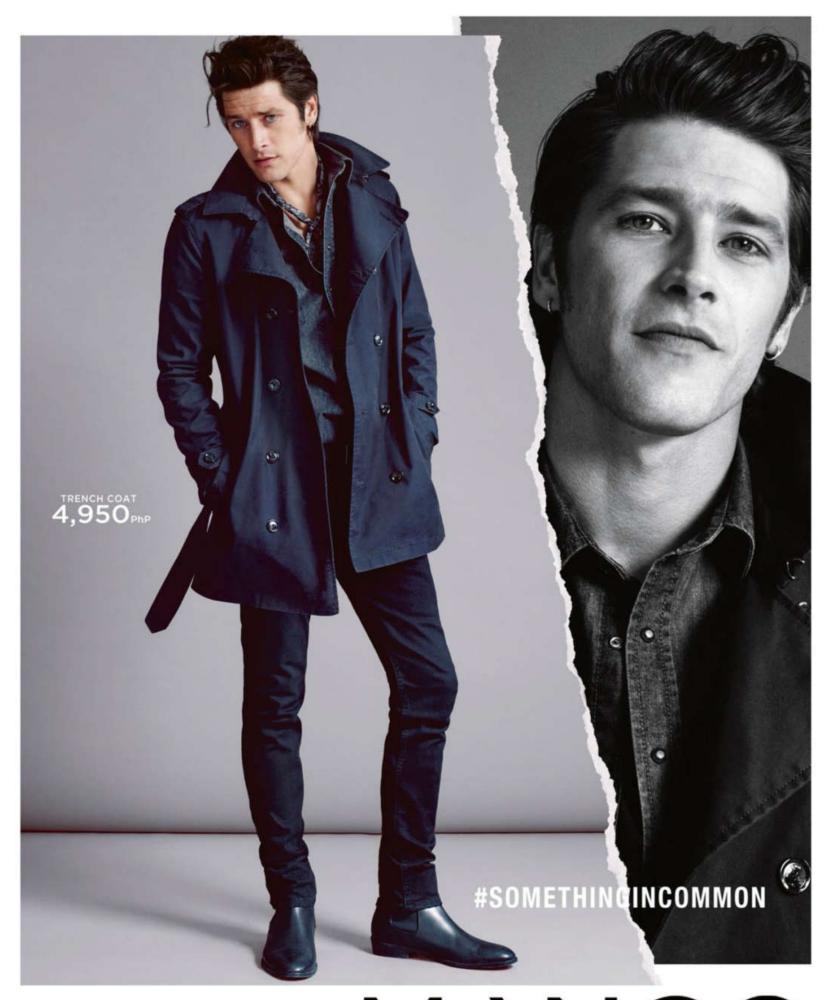






The bullet-proof sport coat.

We fully acknowledge the power of the sport coat. Wear a T-shirt or a polo shirt and then top it off with a sport coat—and hey, you instantly look better. The wondrous garment lends you a sense of propriety any time you wear it. Bonus: Most sport coats are unlined or partially lined (like this one) and will breathe in warm weather. Translation: No excuse not to wear it.













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### The case of two blues.

Ralph Lauren, the purveryor of American style, presents two takes on the blue shirt: from its Polo line, a powder blue oxford, comfortable and breathable, and from its Purple Label, a shirt in a fabric so soft that it settles like a pool of blue. Though different in feel, they convey the same idea: a sense of comfort, a clean look, and a good weekend ahead.

Shirt (31,000) by Ralph Lauren Purple Label, Greenbelt 3.



Style With the natural rumple it acquires upon use, the jaunty roll of its collar, and a soothing shade of blue, the oxford button-down gives you an easygoing character. Shirt by Polo Ralph Lauren, Rustan's Makati; jeans (P12,000) by The Flat Head at Signet.

# THE BEST FILIPINO BEER THAT DESERVES THE GOLD



San Miguel takes pride in producing brews that display excellence garnered through more than a century of brewing. This excellence flows within San Miguel Lifestyle Brews, the line of expertly-crafted beers that provide unique adventures to the palate. Savor the incomparable perfection of 100% malt in San Miguel Premium All Malt. Delight in the crisp, dry finish of San Miguel Super Dry made from the choicest Hallertau hops from Germany. Relish the unparalleled character of dark-roasted malt in Cerveza Negra.

The world was captivated and acknowledged San Miguel's finest brews in the prestigious Belgian competition, MONDE Selection by awarding San Miguel Lifestyle Brews a 2015 Gold Medal for excellence. This award-winning line of brews is indeed a testament of San Miguel's world class standards that will undeniably bring about a distinct drinking experience. San Miguel Lifestyle Brews. Let your taste for the finest tell you that indeed, the difference is within.



Quality Trophy 2015









Gold Quality



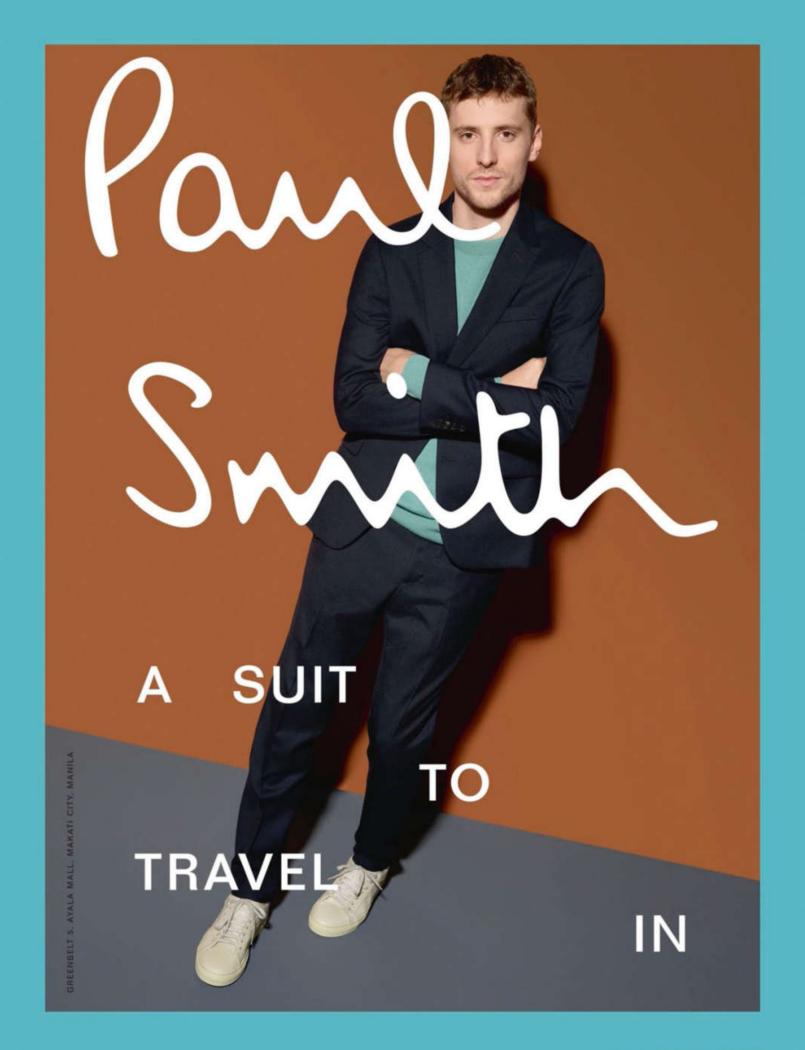


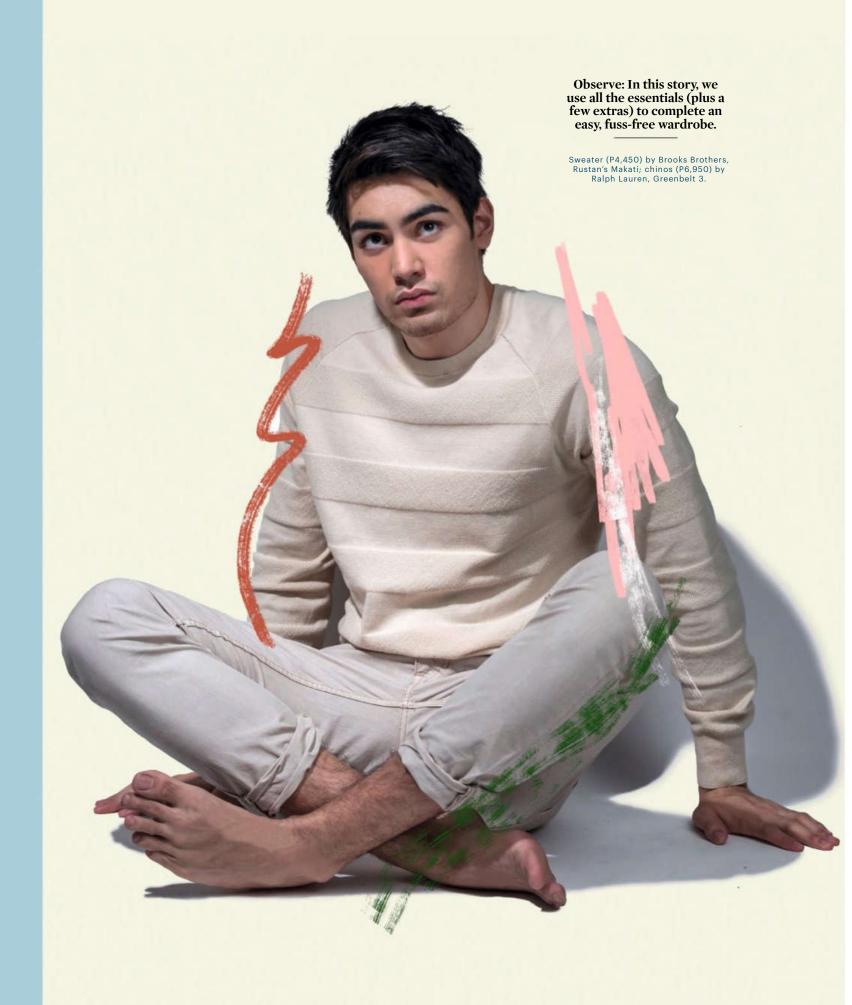




the chino.

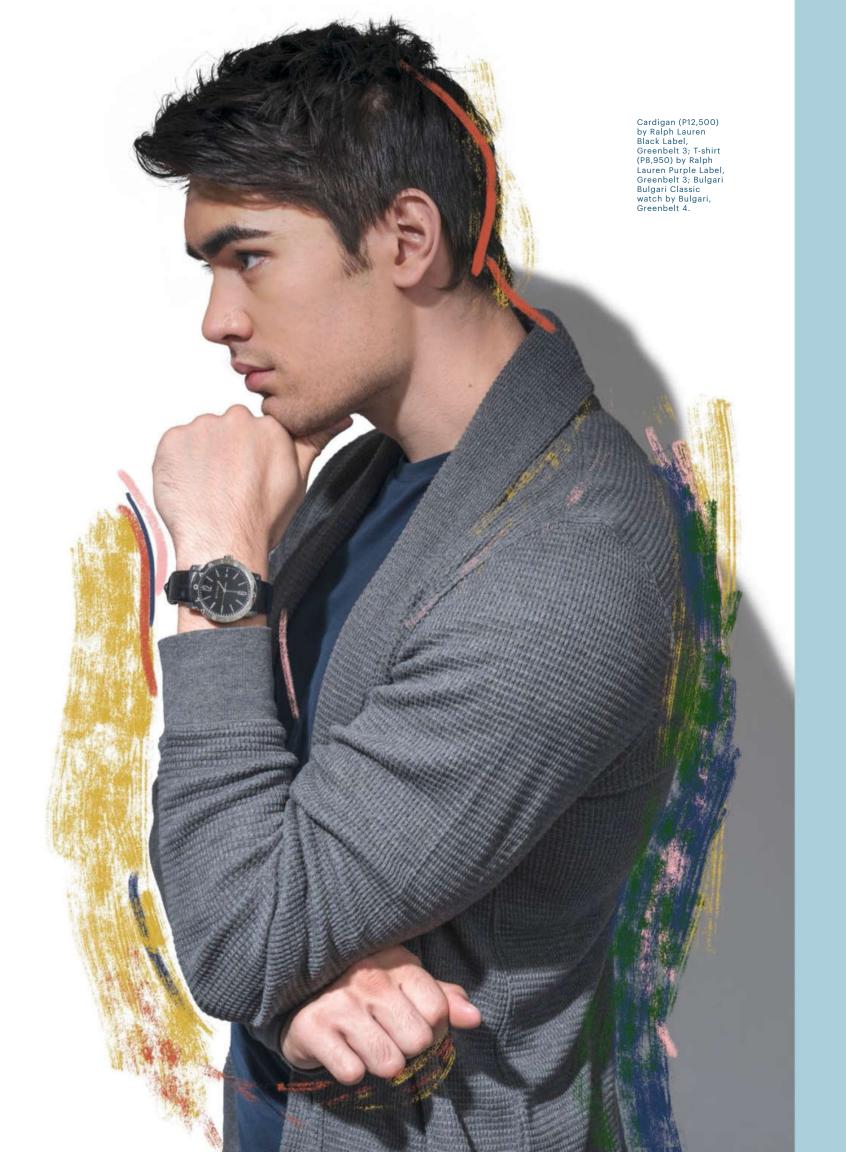
No other garment has experienced a dramatic rise than the chino. Worn to death as the uniform of Casual Fridays in the '90s and then shunned once people figured out that Casual Fridays were not cool, it inched its way back as a garment in good standing when it was a given a trim makeover. It's more than okay to wear one nowadays (the chino goes with everything, really). Look for one in a substantial fabric, like cotton twill, which will feel better and give your legs shape.

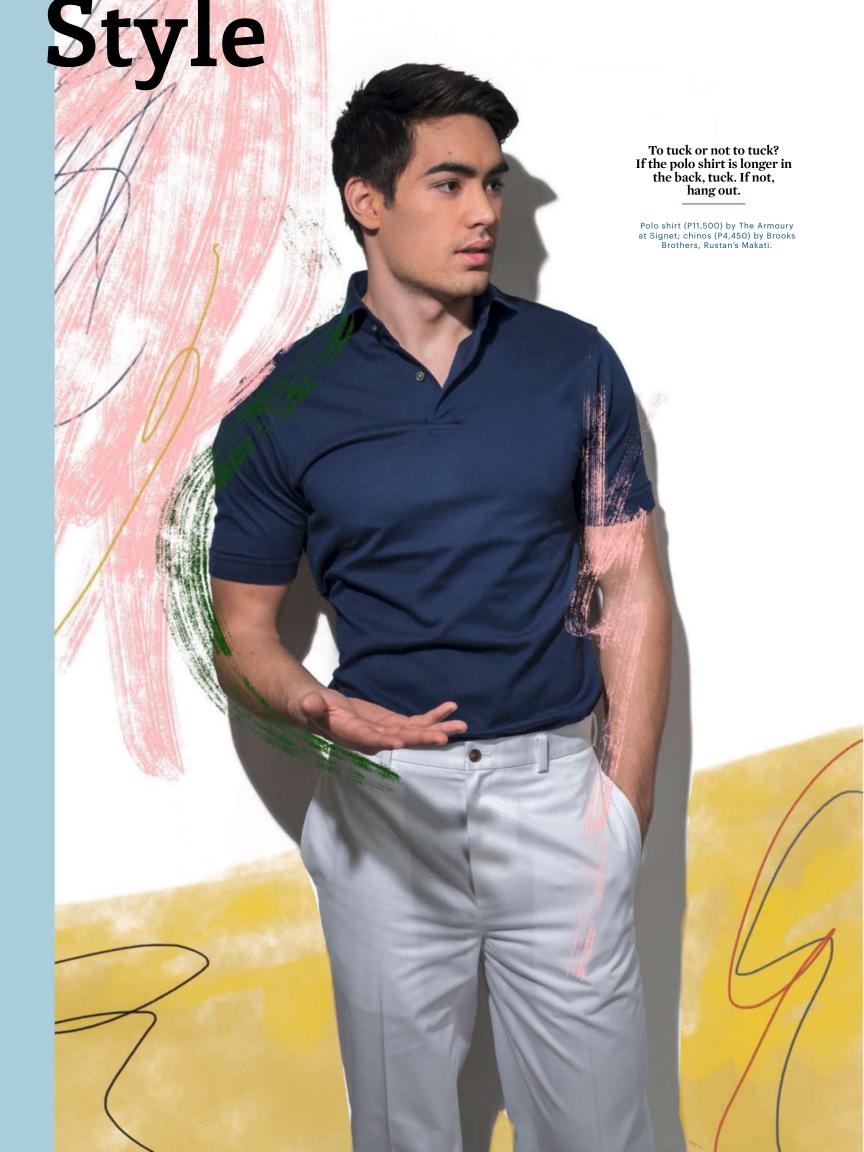










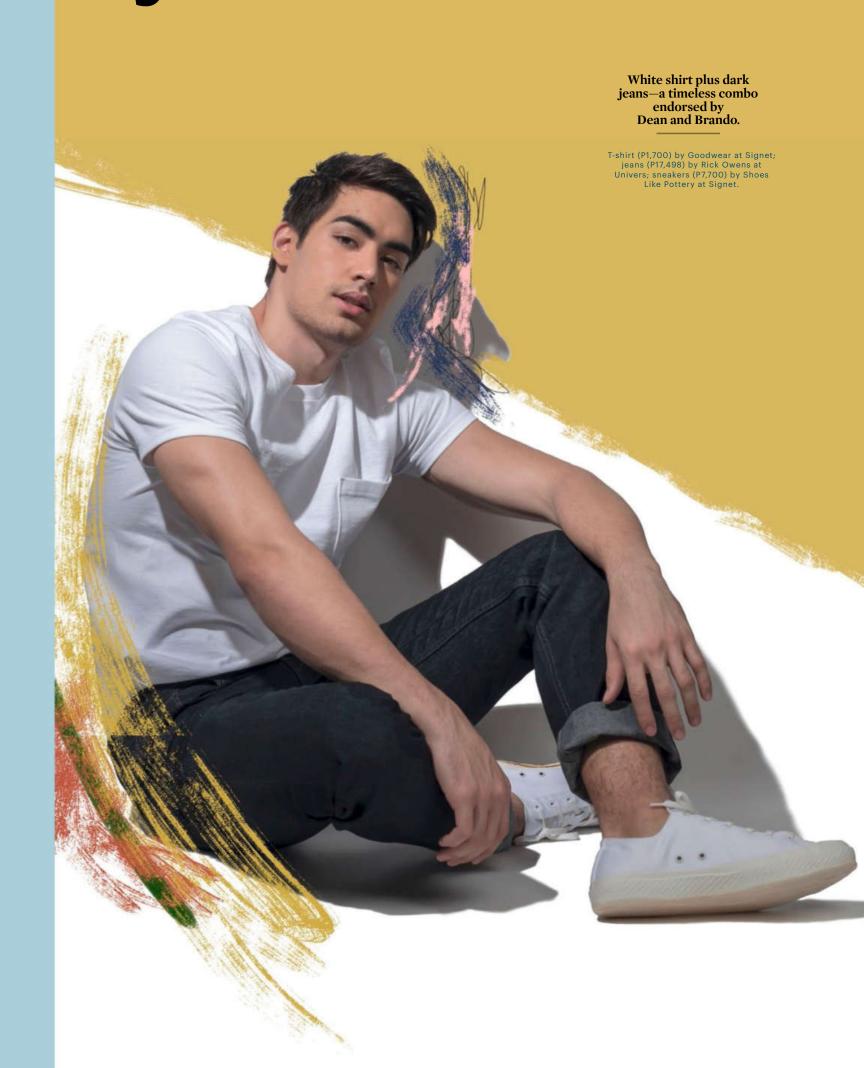




During your downtime, a polo shirt.

On that do-nothing day, when you choose a polo shirt, it says that you care about the people around you. It says that, on this Sunday afternoon, when you could have just worn any old T-shirt, you care enough to present yourself in a more put-together manner. And when you wear it, you also know that proportion is paramount: so never baggy like a sack nor tight like chokehold and those ribbed arm bands should hit you at the mid-arm. Everything is in its right place.

Polo shirt by Hermès, Greenbelt 3.





### Round one: black versus blue.

Think of the mileage you'll get out of beautifully constructed pair of black jeans. You can wear it day or night and with almost anything. In a solid wash, divorced of ornamentation (distressing, whiskers, extra pockets, tears, holes), black jeans take on a sleek and minimalist character. Yet, even if it transmits elegance, it still hints at an element of danger. In a sea of blue denim, you will stand out.

Jeans (P18,500) by Ralph Lauren, Greenbelt 3.



The extra 10 percent: cool edition.

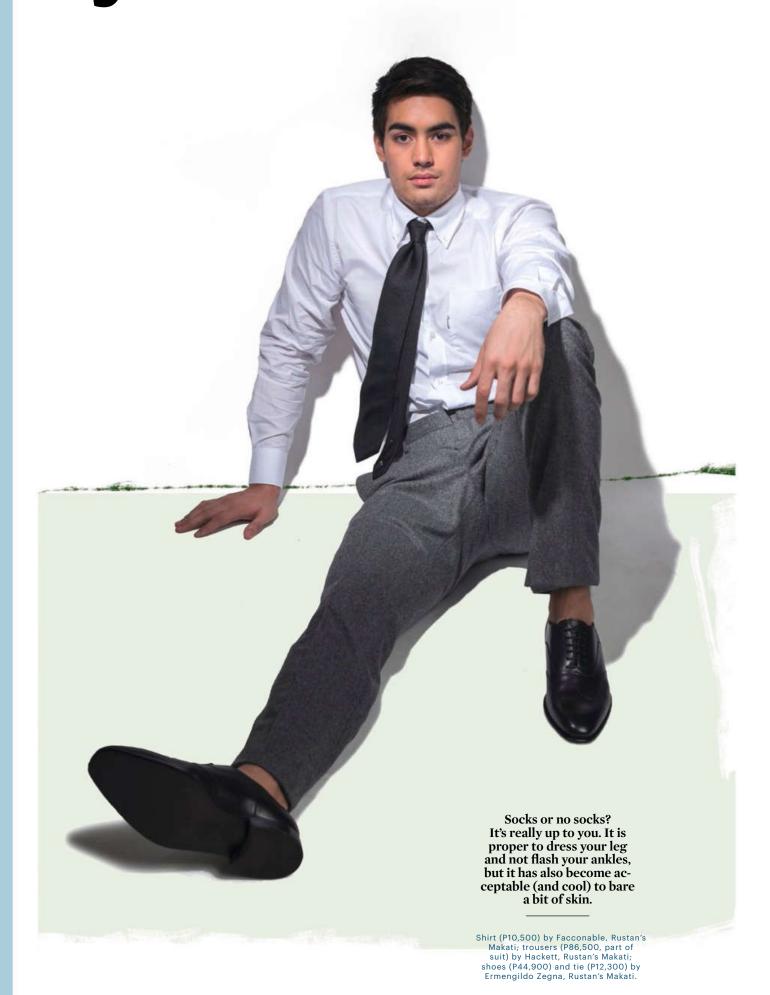
Sunglasses? They are magic. Put it on a doughy face or an angry face or a woke-up-with-a-hangover face, and that doughy-angry-hung over face now looks okay... better than the one you woke up with. The magic of sunglasses is in its ability to conceal wonky-ness and create instant symmetry. Which translates to a good looking and cool vibe no matter what's going on beneath the lens.

Sunglasses by Louis Vuitton, Greenbelt 4. Opposite: Sweater (P19,998) by Christopher Raeburn at Univers; sunglasses by Moscot at Ronnie & Joe, Power Plant Mall.

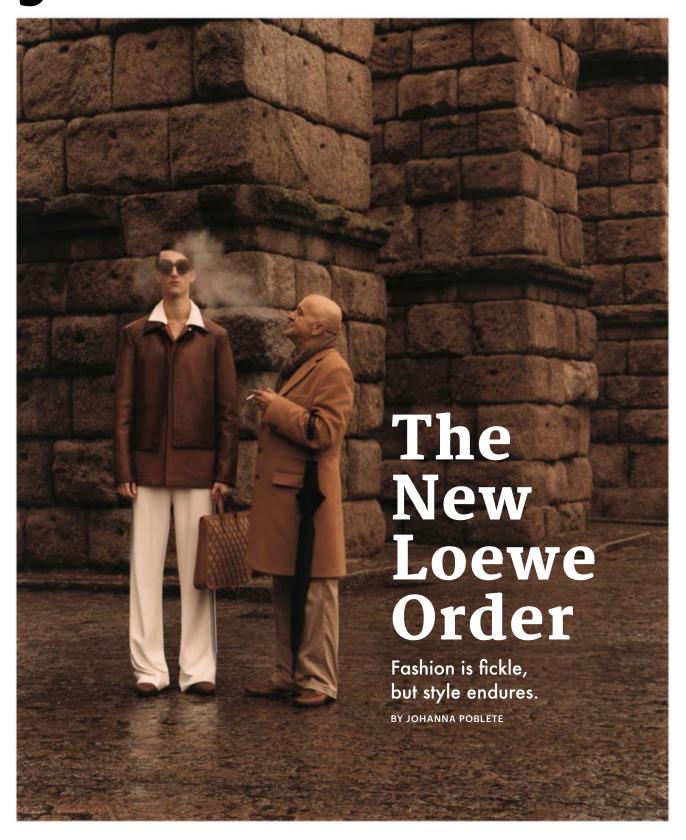












The 168-year-old House of Loewe is no stranger to change. From a humble shop on Calle del Principe in Madrid, run by a cooperative of leather artisans consolidated by German émigré Enrique Loewe Roessberg, it became the official supplier to the Spanish royal court in 1905. Eventually, the favored Spanish luxury brand expanded, and opened its first international shop in London in 1963, transitioning seamlessly into serving jet-setting Hollywood royalty, such as Charlton Heston, Cary Grant, and James Stewart, and even literary juggernaut Ernest Hemingway, who took screen goddess Ava

Gardner on a shopping trip in Madrid and turned her on to Loewe. (Gardner's marriage to Frank Sinatra fizzled out, but her love affair with Loewe became a lifelong passion.)

There's something to be said for a brand that attracts the world's most beautiful women (apart from Gardner, there was also Marlene Dietrich, Rita Hayworth, Sophia Loren, Deborah Kerr, and more recently, Penelope Cruz, Angelina Jolie, Gisele Bundchen, Kate Moss, Miranda Kerr, Naomi Watts, Jennifer Lopez, Sienna Miller, and the list goes on), as well as aspirational male idols (Scott Schuman aka

The Sartorialist was all praises for the versatile Loewe Puzzle bag, introduced last spring, and though it may pain some readers of Esquire, yes, Loewe striped-shirt wearing Nick Jonas counts as an idol among the younger set).

Loewe men's wear debuted in 1983 as a mix of sharp tailoring and supple leather wearables, and it's a testament to Loewe's creative resiliency that it continues to cater to the so-called millennial man of today. Even as society's notions of femininity and masculinity undergo their own metamorphoses, so has Loewe kept in step with the preferences of its patrons. In fact, the House of Loewe has made their most daring move to date: the appointment of creative director Jonathan Anderson—a London-based Irishman with a penchant for defying gender stereotypes via unisex designs for his own JW Anderson label—to meticulously reinvent the heritage luxury brand.

No detail is too small for Anderson in updating Loewe's brand identity—from recasting the Loewe logotype and iconic Anagram, a quadruple L trademark affectionately called *el cangrejo* or "the crab" because of is shape, with help from graphic duo Michael Amzalag and Mathias Augustyniak of M/M (Paris); to transfiguring Loewe stores into an eclectic, harmonious blend of antique (an 18th-century *hórreo* or granary housed at Loewe's first US-based store in Miami) and modern elements (such as Ugo La Pietra's whimsical totemic artworks in Casa

Loewe Milano); down to commissioning bespoke hangers from Toscanini SuMisura, with the crab emblem stamped against a backdrop of the new official Loewe color, a foggy white dubbed "humo" or smoke.

Loewe under Anderson is nothing if not bold; the young designer brings a very distinct, forward-looking, one could even say futuristic, aesthetic to the heritage brand. In the Loewe fall/winter 2015 men's wear collection, for example, you'll find a multihued checkerboard suit with outsized

pants reminiscent of a walking Rubik's cube or a Klimt painting come to life; a navy-hued suede trench coat with terracotta trim that's almost aggressively contrasting; and a hooded jacket in black kangaroo leather with terracotta accents—definitely not for the faint-hearted, but with a hint of swagger and a pair of octagonal sunglasses, you could own these looks.

The collection has a retro feel that's surprisingly very now. Odd shapes and sharp cuts make the familiar more interesting. Choice of colors and textures soothe or unsettle by turns. It's a study in contrasts: On the one hand, Loewe offers a softer approach to men's wear in such pieces as a white cap-sleeved T-shirt with degrading navy blue lines on the bottom half; a navy blue jacquard-checkered zipped cardigan; and a powder blue shearling peacoat with cream shearling collar and patch pockets. On the flipside, Anderson has also inserted more unapologetically masculine pieces such as a black lambskin biker jacket with asymmetrical zip; a tan-brown lamb leather aviator jacket

with cream sheepskin collar trim; and a fitted cognac goatskin leather jacket with shoulder yoke at front and back, and pointed collar, which will easily satisfy the most macho of men.

As far as bags are concerned, you'll be hard-put to find fault: a series of reincarnations for the iconic Amazona (from classic chocolate calf and tan linen calf, to brighter hues such as a yellow calf and *oro* suede pairing, or a white and marine striped textured calf); an attention-grabbing navy suede and red calf X-Cross suitcase (hard to miss at the airport carousel); and a soft natural shearling tote with Anagram patch (perfect as a makeshift pillow, if you were so inclined). At least two pairs of shoes will suffice for that weekend trip: utilitarian black calf lace-up oxfords, and a fancy pair of cognac braided loafers. If you feel the need for additional color, there's also a multihued striped mohair Valgañón scarf and striped napa and suede belts with gold Anagram buckle. Or you could try a little subtlety with a wicked snake brooch.







It's a new age, where personal style is self-consciously cultivated. You'll find that photographer Steven Meisel, who shot the 2015 fall/winter advertising campaign, also provided an old photo from the 1980s of himself kissing the late model, Sean Bohary. Provocative? Yes. Deliberate, too. Anderson is pushing buttons, raising questions (and eyebrows) with "the clothes in your closet that make you wonder why you bought them." But Loewe has withstood political and economic upheavals, including two World Wars, the Spanish civil war, the Franco dictatorship (under which Loewe's window displays, featuring exotic worlds, became beacons of hope), the restoration of the monarchy and the Spanish transition into democracy, and most recently, the financial crisis in the Eurozone.

It takes a strong vision and fearlessness to keep evolving with flair. And Loewe has both.

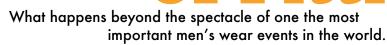
Rustan's Shangri-la Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City.

## Style









BY JASON QUA



There was a buzz in the city of Florence as Pitti Uomo rolled into town once again. The trade show, one of the most influential men's wear events in the world, is the best place to spot upcoming brands, products, and trends for men. "That's PittiColor" was the theme of its 88th iteration, and true enough, there were plenty of colors in the main palazzo of the historic Fortezza da Basso where the event is held. This was also great way to discover a unique blend of styles that you can only find in the "peacocks" that attend Pitti-look for Panama hats, sport coats, and bright-but-muted colors next spring.



But behind the spectacle of street style that floods the Internet, most of the people that attend Pitti are there to buy products for their respective retail stores. Buying is always a delicate balancing act. As a buyer for Signet, my goal is to look for something new and fresh without compromising the ideals that our store was built on, which is an emphasis on quality, construction, and heritage. In my observation, one of the main differences of Pitti from other men's wear shows is its focus on more traditional and classic clothing with these same values. This was well reflected by the participation of respected men's wear brands such as Kiton, Isaia, and Brunello Cucinelli, all of which were all out in full force with big booths that were packed with people. (Sometimes it looked more like a cocktail party than a showcase.)

Peacocks at the main palazzo of the historic Fortezza da Basso of Pitti Uomo reveal what's next for spring: Panama hats, cotton suits, and a muted take on brighter

It's not all work, of course. On the third night, our good friend Salvatore Ambrosi of Ambrosi Napoli was kind enough to host a dinner at Buca dell'Orafo, a tiny joint found along an underpass that feels more like a bomb shelter than a restaurant. We were treated to Florentine specialties like Caprese di Bufala and bistecca or Florentine steak (according to Salvatore, this place had the best bistecca in all of Florence) by Chef Giordano Monni. The dinner was also great opportunity to connect with other men's wear retailers, who share the same passion for quality clothing, such as our friends from The Armoury of Hong Kong, Brio of Beijing, and Villa del Corea of Seoul.

For a nightcap, Caffè Gilli at the Piazza della Repubblica was definitely the spot to be for men's wear guys. There was a more relaxed vibe here than the main plaza in Pitti. You can find men just hanging out and getting drinks with their neckties loosened and jackets slung on shoulders.

After four days, as Pitti Uomo wound down-having had our fill of, not only men's wear, but also pasta, cheeses, bistecca, and wine—I looked back with great excitement at the new brands and products that will be arriving in Signet. Watch out for Edward Green, which has been making shoes since 1890 and is definitely one of the institutional English shoemakers. There'll also be a lot of American-made bags from Frank Clegg and Filson. These are real men's bags, all hardwearing products that with proper care should last you lifetime. Our Pitti experience was beyond amazing, and I look forward to coming back for its next edition in January.

#### **Perfect Fit**

EDITED BY KARA ORTIGA ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALYSSE ASILO

We have come to a point where wearing clothes that fit perfectly is not just an option; it is expected. You don't need to be a a hotshot CEO or Peter Dinklage to have a suit made with only you in mind. With the rise of talented custom tailors in the metro, all you need is a little bit of ka-ching, some patience, and maybe a martini (for a boost of confidence). We know that seeing a tailor can be a little daunting, so allow us to walk you through your options before you get lost in translation.

#### BESPOKE SUIT

When a man says that he wants a bespoke suit, what he really means is that he wants the very best in the realm of customized tailoring. A bespoke suit follows a very personalized crafting process: A master tailor first observes your body type then takes your measurements, sizing up as many as 40 areas in your body to be able to form the perfect suit. The construction of a bespoke suit has to meet a level of technical craftsmanship, and the term is granted only to tailors who exhibit a high level of hand-tailored technique. True bespoke is distinguished from custom-made tailoring in that the former is made 95 percent by hand. And in case you haven't figured it out yet, it is also quite pricey.

Comprehensive measurements are a crucial first step in bespoke tailoring. The master tailor needs a complete perspective of the client's form in order to produce a steamlined silhouette.



The cut of the suit can be made to your liking. For example, if you're always attending board meetings with your hands stretched out, you can request for the length of your sleeves to be purposefully extended.

A true bespoke suit uses only the finest materials. At TIÑO, they use horsehair canvas instead of a stiffener for the interlining to avoid stretching when washed or stored in the closet. A suit like this is long-lasting.

The drink: a craft cocktail that is made according to your personal moods and tastes.





As with any bespoke suit, special requests are entertained, like asking for a hidden pocket to be sewn underneath the armhole of your shirt where you can put your iPhone or a pair of glasses when you don't want to carry them.



Details like trimmings are of premium quality. ASCOT CHANG offers handpicked Australian mother-ofpearl buttons and the use of more flexible and durable core-spun thread, among others.



#### HOW TO TALK TO YOUR TAILOR

A hypothetical scenario

CLIENT: My man! So happy to see you. I need a suit for this new venture I'm getting into, and I trust you can make me look really good.

TAILOR: You came to the right place, sir. Where do you plan to wear it?

CLIENT: It's for this new job...I'm going to be a magician, you see.

TAILOR: Ah, fantastic sir! What kind of magic do you do?

CLIENT: Well, I do the classic rabbits-ina-hat kind of stuff. Sometimes, I dabble in Illusionism. I used to perform small gigs at kiddie parties, but I impressed the ambassador of Switzerland once and now I'm booked for a diplomats' ball!

TAILOR: I see. You'll be wearing this suit with a hat?

**CLIENT:** A black top hat, yes...and I have my black wand.

**TAILOR:** Then I suggest a black suit. Let's talk about details.

CLIENT: Well, I need eight small inside pockets, just big enough to fit a deck of cards. Four on each side, with two under each armhole, and two near the hip area.

TAILOR: Any outside pockets?

**CLIENT:** Yes, just one near the left shoulder where I can put my handkerchief.

TAILOR: Okay.

**CLIENT:** I prefer black buttons, and need my cuffs to be a bit loose, since I always slip things up in there.

TAILOR: Okay, then I suggest a slightly relaxed fit. We'll make sure that you'll look good in it!

**CLIENT:** I've been working out too, so I was hoping you could show off these babies (flexes muscles).

TAILOR: Impressive, sir.

CLIENT: Also, I'm still working on my magician name. But I wanted to have this embroidered on my breast pocket, perhaps? TAILOR: No problem, sir. Let's take your

measurements. We'll choose fabrics later. CLIENT: You're the best! I knew I could

count on you. Oh, one more thing, I need the suit to be fireproof.

TAILOR: Fireproof?

**CLIENT:** For my fire tricks. I sometimes set myself on fire.

TAILOR: We'll see what we can do.

-ALYANA CABRAL

Ascot Chang Makati Shangri-La Hotel. Tiño Benavidez street, Makati.

#### **MADE-TO-MEASURE SUIT**

A made-to-measure suit provides a good fit without burning a hole in your pocket. Made-to-measure suits are sewn from a base pattern and follows standardized manufacturing processes. Only the client's basic measurements are noted, which are then used to alter a garment from an existing base. However, in places like Felipe and Sons, their customized tailoring service fuses both bespoke and made-to-measure methods. Patterns are created from scratch based on the client's measurements, but are sewn using the traditional Filipino style of suit making. The result is a personalized piece that remains affordable.

Fitting samples give you a general idea of how the clothes will fit. Then the piece is altered according to your measurements.

While your inputs are noted, the construction is mostly patterned after the tailor's preference. At WHITE PLANES WORKSHOP, they like to maintain a consistent construction in order to preserve a standard in quality and design.



Details in a made-to-measure suit can still be personalized. FELIPE AND SONS lets you choose from different lapel types. WHITE PLANES WORKSHOP allows the use of different colored buttons, contrast-thread stitching or fabric, and personalized embroidery or monograms.



Bang for your buck: It normally costs P10,000 (or less) only.

Felipe and Sons San Agustin street, Makati.

A made-to-measure suit is manufactured by a machine, making the tension of the wear more similar to an off-the-rack suit, in which the stitches will be the same throughout the entire garment.



It's done in a shorter amount of time. Construction takes around 10 to 20 hours, while a bespoke suit requires 50 to 100 hours.

While a bespoke suit can be fitted multiple times during its construction, a made-to-measure suit is most likely fitted after the suit is finished, though alterations are still possible.

The drink: a spin-off cocktail that is tweaked to your liking without veering too far away from the standard.

White Planes Workshop Katipunan Ave, Quezon City.

#### FIT TO A T

Not every piece of clothing you own will be customized. Buying ready-to-wear is not so bad when you find an option that works for

your body. Though the shirting brand T.M. Lewin is considered off-the-rack, the store provides a sort of personalized experience, wherein the staff measures your neck size and arm length before recommending a shirting style and fit that best suits you. T.M. Lewin shirts allows you to choose a collar shape, two cuff options, and up to six different sleeve lengths. They also have a range of cuts, from relaxed to fully fitted, and styles, from traditionally British to the more modern, from formal to casual. While it's far from having a bespoke shirt made, you get a decent-fitting shirt in a matter of minutes and at a reasonable price. There's nothing to lose.

SM Aura, SM Megamall, SM Mall of Asia

#### **SUIT UP**

A look at some of its finest moments on film.



#### BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S (1961)

Whether it was sitting at a public library, having champagne for breakfast, or professing his love for the complicated Holly Golightly, Paul Varjak always looked sharp in a suit, a slim tie, and an overcoat.



#### THE GODFATHER (1972)

Imagine Michael Corleone planning a gang hit wearing a suit he bought from... Marks and Spencer. Instead, the aging mob patriarch always donned a natty black tux with a red rose pinned to his lapel. Classy.



#### RESERVOIR DOGS (1992)

"Eight men dressed in black suits sit around a table at a breakfast cafe" is how this movie begins. It also ends with them wearing the exact same things.



#### ANCHORMAN (2004)

The misogynist anchor Ron Burgundy and his news crew always looked spiffy in their traditional American-cut suits with matching colors to boot.



#### THE GREAT GATSBY (2013)

Fact: F. Scott Fitzgerald's tailor of choice was Brooks Brothers. It's no surprise that director Baz Luhrman dressed pre-dadbod Leonardo di Caprio in this American brand.





#### **ARTISTIC FLAIR**

Louis Vuitton's Mon Monogram service lets you place your choice of colorful stripes and your initials on their luxurious pieces. Inspired by iconic works of art, we play around with their palette of colors. For your next Mon Monogram bag, try these combinations:



#### CUSTOMIZED CARRIERS



The Sartoria line by Piquadrohandmade in Italy with fine leather-allows for extensive personalization so that it speaks more about yourself than it does anything (or anyone) else. Choose the silhouette: Do you want a messenger, computer briefcase, or a duffel bag? And then the fun begins: different finishes, choices of leather, interlinings, zippers, buckles, and types of stitches. You can also have your initials or an inscription engraved. The construction takes up to

60 days, and each item
bears a serial number
that guarantees it's
a one-off piece.
Surely a worthwhile wait for
something you
can truly call
your own.

www.piquadro.com

#### **SHOEMAKING 101**









MEASURE For made-to-measure, clients try on trial shoes to determine the best fit, while for bespoke a thorough measurement session will be conducted. The result yields a unique and personal mold. MAKE Styles are discussed. For Spigoli shoes, Kobebased shoemaker Koji Suzuki sticks to the classics (oxfords, loafers, chukkas). With the shoemaster's guidance, materials and details are also selected. And then the construction of the shoe begins. WAIT Made-to-measure shoes are done in a couple of months, while bespoke creations take a little bit longer, but the incomparable fit and comfort is worth the wait. TA-DA! The sensei's masterpiece is complete. Your feet have never felt and looked this good.



#### JEANS DO COME TRUE

There was a time when all we knew about buying jeans was how difficult it was. Which is why when designer Ino Caluza started Viktor Jeans almost 13 years ago, the reception was sensational. Finally, here was a design guru who could manipulate denim so that it fits your body the right way. It was the pioneering high-end denim customization service in Manila in a time when bespoke services were not vet in full bloom. Since then, Ino has managed to slip his perfect denims into our wardrobe-becoming the goto designer denim brand and a jean whisperer of sorts.

> But with the increasing number of custommade shops, jean labels, and high street fashion brands offering a myriad of denim choices, it was inevitable for Ino to strive for change. This year, he prepares to relaunch Viktor Jeans, elevating it to a more premium brand. "The jeans market 10 years ago was so different from the retail scene now. We felt that it was time again to make new changes

> > and stand out from

all of these options available today," savs Ino.

The rebranding aims to adapt to the fast-changing needs of his clients. What things are to be expected? A narrowing down of offerings mostly, in order to maintain a standard of design and fabrication, which in turn, he hopes will upgrade the overall experience for the client. "Our designs will be edited. From almost 40 different styles, we will cut it down to around 20 that will best represent the core DNA of what Viktor is supposed to be about. We'll offer more selections of premium Japanese selvedge denim, and for the first time, more choices of premium leathers for jackets and jeans, while still maintaining an affordable price point," he says. Ready-to-wear pieces such as T-shirts and shorts will be associated instead with its younger brand, Vik.

Even the most discerning person would be able find his perfect pair of jeans at Viktor. "Fashion is about exclusivity. Though jeans are the most democratizing item in your wardrobe right now, the quality of your denim fabric and that personalized experience of having a pair done for you gives it more value and makes it more premium." As their humorous tagline states: "This Viktor is specifically made for (your name here). Hope you get laid."

Let us know how that goes.

-LOUIE MILLER

Greenbelt 5, Makati

At a time when there is a phone app for absolutely anything you can think of (from calorie counters to lie detectors), customizing clothes was bound to find its place online, too. Jeanuine Jeans lets you build your own pair of jeans in just a few clicks. Choose your cut, fabric, stitch, color of thread, rivet designs and more (it's so easy your two-year-old nephew can do it). A Jeanuine Jeans Agent personally supervises each piece, communicating with you at every step of the process. And then you wait. When it's finished, the parcel is shipped to your doorstep. You didn't even have to break a sweat. You could've done it over lunch in the office.

www.jeanuine.com

#### **BLUE JEAN BABY**

A look at the history of the blue jeans as worn by musical icons who rocked it on stage.

**ELVIS** The King of Rock and Roll sported relaxed straight jeans in the 1957 film Jailhouse Rock. He ultimately became the symbol of rebellious youth during postwar America, and made way for the laidback style that would become etched

> in pop culture history.

**BOB DYLAN** Leave it to this folk-rock prophet to preach about state issues in his music, while looking super fly in slim cut jeans. Bob looks dapper as ever.

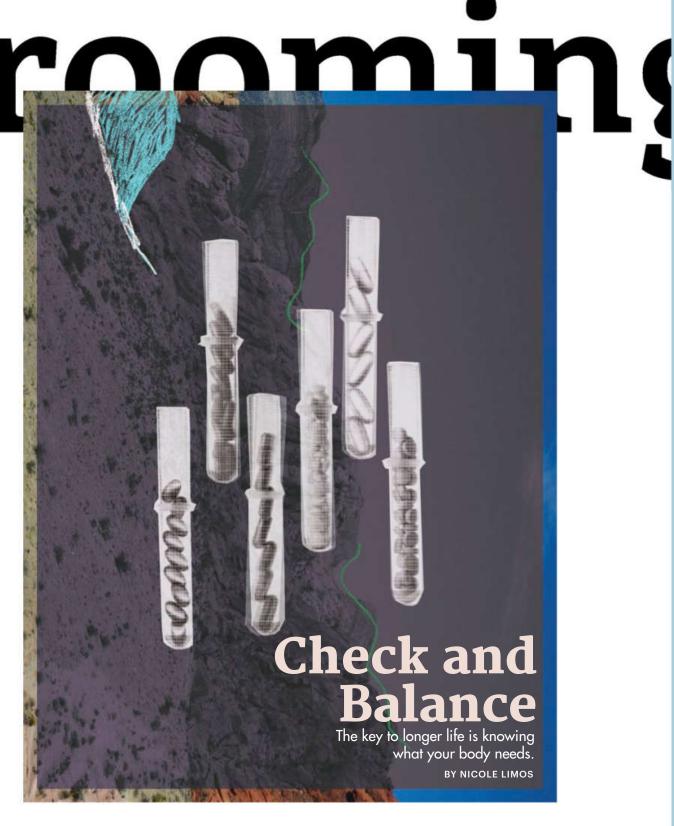


#### KURT COBAIN

The poster boy of grunge, Nirvana vocalist Kurt Cobain dressed up by dressing down. His I-don't-give-a-f\*\*\* uniform consisted of graphic T-shirts, oversized sweaters, and acid washed jeans ripped at the knees



TUPAC Before there Shakur—the original gangster who had enviable bravado. He pulled off a denim chore coat, denim-ondenim, and this jumper, which THUG LIFE he wore at a red carpet appearance.



You can diet and workout and then lose weight drastically—without knowing if you've compromised your body. You can eat more vegetables and take a host of multivitamins and pray they're all you need to prevent sickness. Or you can take a look at the very activities of your body's cells to know the exact levels of your vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, toxic elements, and deficiencies, and then start your journey to better health and longer life.

**Your annual physical exam is not enough.** To determine and prevent what could be future illnesses, cancer included, from occurring, it's crucial to look into the habits of your cells and all the elements that drive their cycles. This is the premise at Biobalance, the health optimization and wellness institute led by Dr. Ted Achacoso, who, with specializations in anti-aging, nutrition, longevity, age management, and sports medicine, helps keep your nutrient levels at their optimum so

that your body's cells function at their best.

Say, if you produce cancer cells every so often like most people, and your body's antigens recognize these cells as "foreigners" and then attack them, you won't get cancer. Or if your body is able to see your healthy cells or tissues as they are, and doesn't mistake them as elements that should be attacked, you won't get autoimmune diseases such as diabetes, arthritis, and gout. "There must be a balance between anabolism or processes that grow, and catabolism or processes that destroy," says Achacoso. At Biobalance, you are tested beyond your organ functions. Doctors look at your cells and over a hundred factors that contribute to their anabolism and catabolism, which include your vitamins and minerals and toxins, with the objective of supplementing your deficiencies and making your body function at its optimum as well as predicting and preventing future illnesses. "Cells are the fundamental structures in these organs so by looking at them first, we more or

less see what the organ will go through. We can test that now even before our patients get sick. Then of course we do something about it."

And you will be motivated to do something when you are handed your 30page test results and the center's doctors begin explaining its details, from your unique manner of metabolizing each ingredient in the food you eat and the way your body processes (or doesn't process) certain nutrients to the state of your gut (which comprises over 70 percent of your immune system) and the many ways of addressing your health concerns in accordance to your lifestyle.

You may not be processing your carbohydrates right. Thus, you feel bloated after eating and you always feel hungry. This could mean you're better off eating more fat and protein, such as eggs, red meat, butter, and nuts, to sustain energy for hours. If you're carbohydrate-intolerant, which could eventually lead to insulin-resistance, it simply means your body is not as effective in managing the starches and sugars that you intake, so, say, instead of converting just around 40 percent of your carbohydrate intake into fat, it converts up to 60 percent. For some people, it doesn't even matter if they're eating whole grain or not, or white or brown rice, as they apparently get processed just the same. Your Biobalance test results will reveal all this and include a suggested diet plan in relation to its findings as well as supplement packs for daily intake to address your deficiencies.

#### Your sleep cycle is making you fat.

"One of the first things that make you fat is actually an irregular sleep cycle," says Achacoso, who devised his own Sleep Anchoring Technique where you are advised to anchor your activities based on your sleep cycle. "As you know, the hormone system and the nutrient system work on a very ancient communication system. It's an analog system. Your brain works electrochemically, which is digital or faster, but your cycles, like your sleep cycle, are driven by hormones and nutrients," he says. "Your body has to rejuvenate; it reconsolidates, it consolidates memory at night, it does all these things. Sleep deprivation causes you to actually eat a lot more."

The average sleep cycle is around 90 minutes, which means seven hours and 30 minutes of sleep is pretty good with roughly five cycles. If you wake up in between cycles, you get the feeling of being jerked awake and hit by a truck or you

get the groggy, sleep-deprived feeling all day. The lesson is, if you have to set your alarm, count the minutes and set it to when a sleep cycle ends, whether its just two or three or four cycles.

Know, too, that anything with light, even when your eves are closed, affects your sleep pattern and quality. LED lights, that blue light on your computer screen, that blinking light on your TV, the games you play and apps you check on your phone before you sleep-they force the body to wake up because again, it works on an ancient pattern when our ancestors have relied on the blue light of dawn as a signal of a new day and the time to rise. "Any light you have

#### "One of the first things that make you fat is actually an irregular sleep cycle."

with a blue spectrum is going to destroy whatever melatonin-also known as the sleep hormone-is in your brain," says Achacoso.

Your gut is leaking. And that's not good when it's considered an entire organ in itself. The gut barrier is responsible for absorbing or secreting substances that we intake. The gut flora, on the other hand, protects you from infection and regulates your metabolism. When you have a leaky gut or when it is inflamed or lacking the necessary good bacteria, there may be substances that pass through it that are not supposed to. So the body mounts a defense against them by producing antigens, its natural killer cells.

"But then, when it mounts a defense against something foreign, the body sometimes recognize certain portions of that antigen, which can look similar to other healthy protein sequences in the body, and attacks them," says the doctor. "A lot of the inflammation that occurs afterward with this leaky gut will result in autoimmune diseases, cancers, etc. It's a case of mistaken identity."

At Biobalance, they are able to detect the overall health of your gut, which hosts over 400 kinds of diverse bacterial species. "The gut health reveals many things about your entire body," Achacoso says. "In fact you could do a gut biopsy to test Parkinson's disease. You'd be able to see cells in there five years before

you see them in the brain, thus you could already predict the defects that the patient will have in the brain. The sooner you predict, the faster you can work on preventing diseases, cancers, inflammations, and even depression."

You eat anytime you want. But if you want to lose fat, an easy way of doing it is narrowing the time window of your carbohydrate intake. For instance, when you sleep at night, your body shuts off and your liver stores glucose in the form of glycogen. Your body would have used 80 percent of that glycogen to sustain you during sleep, and you are left with 20 percent when you wake up. "Now, if you don't eat carbs in the morning and just have water or just eat protein and fat, say, until noon, and do a 40-minute brisk walk, you'll spend that remaining liver glycogen and you'll actually start burning fat. That's using a principle called nutritional ketosis, where you're actually using your fats to fuel yourself. Then you can break your carbohydrate fast at lunch."

Another way of managing your eating pattern if you just love carbohydrates is narrowing the time window of eating. We're the only species who give ourselves permission to eat anytime within 16 hours in a day. So try to limit your eating to 14 hours a day, then 12, then 10, then eight-say from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. "After 7 p.m., you can't eat anymore. You can lose five pounds in two weeks, which is slow, but ideal," he notes. "When you start losing your fat and you start feeling better, there is a snowball effect and you'd want to carry on feeling better. You know some people really eat a lot out of habit. So just by little changes, not even in the food, but just the timing of when you take them, makes a lot of difference."

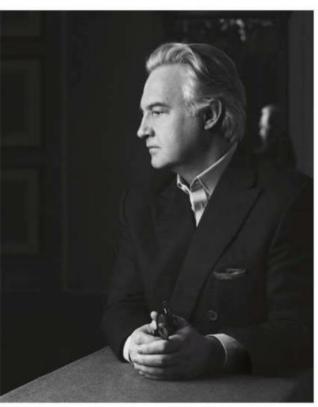
So before you try that workout that your friend recommended or follow a diet regimen you read in a magazine, first know if your body needs it. "People actually respond to the concept of balance," says Achacoso, "For me, it's not even the concept of moderation, it's the concept of balance. They respond to standing at the center. Something is not necessarily good or bad unless you step on one side or the other. When you're at the center, it just is. And that's a good thing." 🛂

Third floor, Soho Central, 748 Shaw Boulevard, Greenfield District, Mandaluyong. +63 917 521 4860.

### Grooming



Creative director John Ray (right) describes the new Dunhill Icon as "an audacious scent that embodies strength, sensitivity, and sophistication."



#### **Road Rules**

The world of motoring inspires Dunhill's new fragrance.

Alpaca dogtooth jackets, shearling car coats, calfskin holdalls, a dizzying assortment of accessories plus two "homes" (Bourdon House in London and Twin Villas in Shanghai) that offer bespoke services, a barber, a spa, and a private screening room—this is the lifestyle of Britishness and masculinity that Dunhill curates. To add to this rich universe, Dunhill introduces another element, a signature fragrance: Icon.

"The daily ritual of men's grooming is something that I wholeheartedly subscribe to, and wearing a fragrance is at the core of that," says creative director John Ray. For the Dunhill man, that scent is "exotic and distinctive" as expressed by a mix of ingredients gathered from his travels-Italian bergamot, Tunisian petitgrain, cardamom, vetiver, oud wood, and more.

Ray describes the man who wears Icon as classically masculine, a well-rounded man, really: "He has a witty and energetic approach to life. He carries his life experiences with him. He is practical in a way that unintentionally reveals true character."

He is also a "habitual traveler of the world," an idea that can be traced back to founder Alfred Dunhill's unique relationship with motoring. As the story goes, a young Alfred, enamored by the new age of automobiles, transformed his father's saddlery business into a hub that "sold everything but the motor," and since then, wheels and racing and the idea of going places have become part of the brand's design language.

Motoring appears in elements like the engine-turned pattern, the chassis texture, or the facet shape (inspired by lights made by Alfred for Rolls Royce).

Subtle details such as racing green enamel snaps on an Icelandic shearling overcoat appear in this season's collection. Of course, the motoring code, more specifically the roar of the engine, is applied in Icon with the engine-turned pattern (a field of tiny and tactile steel diamonds) wrapping around its cylindrical bottle.

Icon is intended for a global audience, which is also the direction of the brand. "Men are increasingly more passionate about contemporary luxury menswear," observes Ray. "This is the perfect opportunity to create a new language of dressing, which reinforces the heart of the brand and presents Britishness to a global market." And so, the British company looks to Asia to source tailoring fabrics, which are then transformed into "a beautiful, unstructured, 100-percent silk suit based on one found in the archives and redolent of those worn on the Grand Tour" or "a pinstripe suit, summery and fresh, in lightweight fabric." Both are ideal for travel-and for humid destinations. "The Asian market is incredibly important to us so I am always designing with their needs in mind," he adds.

Alfred Dunhill made it his mission to equip the gentleman and the brand continues his intent today. "Our mission is to provide the modern-day gentleman with everything he may need in order to always look and feel his best in every occasion," reiterates Ray. "Britishness and masculinity are characters that define the brand. Quality and innovation are key elements of everything that we create." And so now, we have Icon.

-JOHN A. MAGSAYSAY

Rustan's Makati.

# just a bit heaviness on the knees, but it eventually disappeared after a few hours," he says. And after? On the first week, Robbie reports that the pain in his knee decreased and then eventually went away.

"There was definitely a huge improve-

ment in my lifestyle and pain management. I was able to play and perform

without the discomfort," he adds. "I really appreciated the cartilage regenera-

tion, which also helped improve the tear

and inflammation."

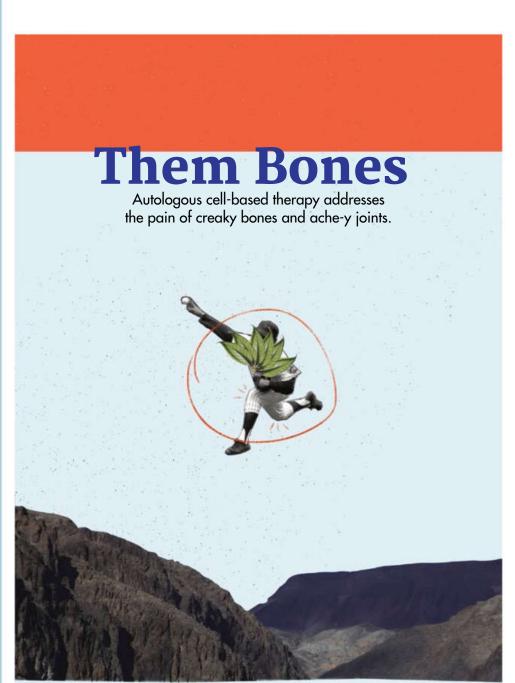
TV host and triathlete Kim Atienza had another reason for undergoing the therapy: "I'm 48. At this age, I'm beginning to feel all kinds of aches. As a triathlete, I want to prolong my athletic life. I decided to get it for my knees—not that there was any problem with them, but because I want to swim, bike, and run up until I'm 75."

It's been almost a year since he had the therapy and Kim reports that his knee has been swell. "I just finished the Condura. My best time was three hours and 50 minutes, which is a good time for someone my age," he says. "I finished, and my knees were pain-free. They did not act up in any way." Kim plans to participate in more marathons this year, a Half Ironman and an Olympic triathlon. "I'm able to bike, run, and swim, faster now. It's my fifth year of triathlons and I've improved greatly," he adds.

The treatment, which is particulary effective for younger individuals, from ages 15 to 40 (but as seen with Kim, will still work well with older patients), can address chronic sports injuries, tendinitis, muscle strain, and degenerative arthritis that do not require surgery. It may also be used to speed up healing of postoperative orthopaedic cases involving bone, tendons, and ligaments. Another upshot: According to scientific studies, healing time for sports injuries treated with autologous cell-based therapy is 50 percent shorter.

"Autologous cell-based therapy is effective in the sense that, compared to just taking painkillers, which simply block out the pain receptors, the treatment has the capability to regenerate damaged cells, further preventing the recurrence of chronic pain," says Dr. Poblete. So less aches and pains, quicker recovery, and use of an able body. Why not?

Stemcare Institute by the Aivee Group, East Building, Burgos Circle, Bonifacio Global City.



Grooming

Feeling creaky? Don't reach for the medicine cabinet. In this new world, the cure can be found within you. Molecular orthopedics and cell-based therapies help people recover from the debilitating pain of joint and bone problems—and it's all through a minimally invasive technique.

"Autologous cell-based therapies are used in cases of chronic pain, as in pain that doesn't easily go away, or isn't easily relieved by painkillers," says orthopedic surgeon Dr. Charlie Poblete of the Stem-Care Institute by the Aivee Group. "It's usually caused by traumatic damage to bodily tissues, which may have been due to injuries, accidents, or simply age- or activity-related wear and tear. Once a tissue is damaged, it releases chemical mediators that stimulate pain recep-

tors." Thus, pain.

Sounds like a treatment only old people need, but think again. Even someone as young as a musician in his 30s can benefit from the relief of the treatment. "I accidentally injured myself in a basketball game, and after a checkup, it was confirmed that I had a partial tear on my right knee, specifically on my ACL, MCL, and miniscus," shares model and musican Robby Mananquil. But because his band Pulso was active at the time, Robbie chose not to undergo an operation (and spend the next six months recovering on the sidelines). Instead, he tried the new therapy.

Robby's procedure took three hours. There was an extraction of fat, and after processing the therapy fluid, it was injected into his knee. "All I felt was

#### Esquire

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# NOTES & ESSAYS

LUIS H. FRANCIA
ON LITERARY CIRCLES
CAROLINE KENNEDY
ON CIRCUS LIFE

EDITED BY SARGE LACUESTA
ARTWORKS BY MIDEO CRUZ
IMAGES COURTESY OF BLANC GALLERY

# NOTES & ESSAYS



#### ALL ROADS LEAD TO HOME

Here in Nuoro as in Manila, I feel a sense of desolation, a wildness in the wind, hinting of buried pasts and forgotten lives.

**LUIS H. FRANCIA** 

Grazia Deledda never smiles in the photos displayed at her childhood home in Nuoro, now a museum (though "shrine" may be a more apt description) in mountainous northeastern Sardinia. Her gaze is wary, keeping us at arm's length. Absence haunts her, and sharpens her writer's senses to the realm of the invisible.

Even when the Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to her in 1926, the first Italian woman to be accorded the honor, it was clear that the trappings of celebrity were not her cup of tea. She may have left Nuoro, she may have left Sardinia, but neither Nuoro nor Sardinia ever left her. She was glad she got the Nobel. Who wouldn't be? But she would not change her way of life because of it. Once she moved to Rome in 1900, did she do as the Romans do? I'm sure she did, but she remained Nuorese.

Walking through the various rooms of her childhood home—big, roomy—this is the sense I get, both from the photographs and the wall texts, and what I glean about the woman behind the writing: fierce, reclusive, intent on keeping the fire of being a writer burning, a writer intimately connected to Sardinia.

I had never heard of her until the year



Supreme, 2014

before, when Ciriaco Offedu, an expatriate writer from Nuoro living in Hong Kong, mentioned her to me and some other writers teaching at the City University of Hong Kong's MFA writing program, from which Ciriaco had obtained his degree. He proposed having a writer's conference, in conjunction with City University, which would center on her, and be held in Sardinia. So it was thanks to Grazia Deledda and Ciriaco, in collaboration with City University and its MFA director, the fiction writer Xu Xi, that a temporary tribe of poets, fictionists, and essayists from various parts of the globe spent a glorious October week on the Mediterranean island of Sardinia.

To the uptight elders of Nuoro, Deledda's literary outpouring was a needless hurt inflicted by a female, no less, an airing of dirty laundry. On the other hand, who better to air dirty laundry than women in a society where they were expected to maintain the household; from cooking to, you guessed it, taking care of the family wash? To Deledda, however, this was no act of betrayal, but rather an attempt to render as accurately as possible the milieu that she grew up in, warts and all. And ultimately to situate herself in the world, to strain against the limits a small town imposes. And as is typical of small towns, Nuoro circled its wagons.

Deledda writes not to condemn but to discern how the strong currents of feudalism and Catholicism affect individuals brought up in such a densely layered society. In Canne Al Vento (Reeds in the Wind), we see this highly circumscribed world through the eyes of Efix, the stoic and loyal servant of the once-wealthy Pintor sisters, a world of strict social hierarchies but one, too, where the night belongs to mysterious spirits: ghosts of women who died in childbirth, elves, dwarves, fairies, dragons, and the ancient "cananea slithering around on the sandy marshland." To protect himself, Efix positions a big reed cross against the door of his hut. His arsenal includes "blessed olive branches, a painted candle, a scythe for keeping vampires away, and a little sack for protection against the panas."

This world spoke of the one I had grown up in: Catholic, feudal, with class boundaries rarely if ever crossed. As for the creatures that Efix is so wary of? I recognized them as kindred beings but simply in different clothes: the nuno sa punso, the tikbalang, the aswang, and the manananggal familiar companions of any child growing up in a heavily Catholic archipelago, where angels and devils take on a multitude of forms. Manila then was not yet so densely packed, urban sprawl was unheard of, and country and city flowed into each other's collective imagination. Here in Nuoro as in Manila, I feel a sense of desolation, a wildness in the wind, hinting of buried pasts



All Heart All Day, 2011

and forgotten lives.

On our daily excursions, I notice that lovely Carmela, one of two Sardinians who assist Ciriaco in making sure that we get to where we need to go and on time, makes the sign of the cross just before we leave the hotel—exactly the same self-benediction Pinoys make when going on a trip. Our visit to churches induces my Catholic self, long in hibernation, to poke his head out. These

are settings long familiar to me. Bells, rose windows; the crucified Christ, Mary, the Father with his white beard, cherubim, plaster saints; the Stations of the Cross; masses and baptisms; the whole panoply of sights and sounds and rituals that formed part of the warp and woof of the world I grew up in—and of Grazia Deledda's.

They are a reminder that once upon a time the world was and is a mysterious place, with the church a pillar of reassurance—a reassurance that as an adult I ques-

tion. While my leave-taking of Manila was also a leave-taking of the Catholic Church, as reluctant as I am to admit it, the Catholic in me has never left, certainly not the one who appreciates the Church's theatrical aspects but who can do without the theological claptrap.

What really clinches this sense of recollection, this feeling-at-homeness, though, is *lechon*! Hog heaven, pun intended, and loads of it: meaty, fatty, delicious, with robust Sardinian reds to wash it down. We

are feted everywhere we go, as though we were prodigal sons and daughters. Every meal, even those described in our schedule as "light," is a feast. We sit, we eat, we drink, we stuff ourselves, we groan, and then we eat and drink some more. Life can be difficult. Neither I nor any of the others need encouragement to indulge in gluttony, one of the seven deadly sins. Having attended a Jesuit high school and college, I remember how my classmates and I would joke that it was our obligation to sin just so the priests would have a reason for being.

Coming after viewing the imposing Redeemer Christ high on a mountain and a visit to the beautiful cappelina just below, the first lunch is a harbinger of what is to come. There we are, with the local host family, gathered al fresco, seated at tables laden with food and wine, feasting, talking, having a ball. How many times have I watched a scene like this onscreen, and here it is, gloriously unfolding, in real, not reel, time. Rimbaud put it best: "My life was a feast, where all wines flowed and all hearts were open." That poéte maudit was a Catholic, and had the gift of guilt that renders pleasure even more pleasurable!

Once, we visit the Museo delle Maschere Mediterranee, a small but excellent museum dedicated to masks from Sardinia and the Mediterranean, in the town of Mamoiada. I had never seen the eye-catching mamuthones and issohadores mannequins on display, principal figures at the town's annual January festival. This being October, we are instead treated to a rare demonstration of the donning of the mamuthones costumes-thick sheepskin and heavy copper bells hung from one's back-and the frightening wooden masks that the sturdy young men (and only men) wear. Accompanying them are the issohadores, who do not put on masks but wear the red coats so strikingly similar to the military uniforms worn by the British once upon a colonial time. Surely this has to be a symbolic representation of the burdens of colonialism.

The grotesque masks remind me of Marinduque's Moriones festival during Holy Week. Revelers clad in colorful tunics and masks parade through the streets of Boac, reenacting the search for Longinus, the Roman centurion blind in one eye, who converts to Christianity when, upon piercing Christ hanging on the cross, has his sight miraculously restored when his blind eye is hit by Christ's blood.

Afterwards, we repair to a local trattoria for dinner. Need I mention that it is a "light" feast? The evening's highlight is the rounds of boisterous singing by the *mamuthones* at one end of the dining hall and by us writers at the other end: our impromptu version of

Oktoberfest. At one point, Wei Li, a writer from Beijing, wanders over and is serenaded by the men, much to her delight.

The fictionists James Scudamore and Evan Fallenberg, the poet Ravi Shankar, and myself spend our last day in the port city of Cagliari, whence our return flights take off. We'd had a raucous farewell dinner the night before at a Nuoro restaurant where, in a program emceed by the novelist Justin Hill, we express our appreciation of Ciriaco and all those that have made this visit an exhilarating one. Many of us sing, including the novelist Sharmistha Mohanty and the Singapore-based writer Robin Hemley, accompanied by Xu Xi on piano. Ravi and I bill ourselves as DJ Ravi and MC Luigi, a.k.a. the Rapping Poets, with Maestro James "Il Pulpo" on keyboards. We do our damndest imitation of homeboys, talkin' and rhymin' and jivin', a few Wasaks! and Hayops! thrown in. Ravi even gets an offer to cut an album from one of Carmela's brothers.

After lunch at a Cagliari sidewalk café, we walk down to the harbor and while away some time before our respective flights. Ravi and I look out over the harbor while Evan and James sit on a nearby bench, deep in conversation. A flurry of activity at the other end of the promenade catches my eye. At first I think it is simply two friends horsing around, but then one of them kicks the other, not simulated but real. Ravi and I hurry over. Two young bucks, one in a green T-shirt, the other in black, have squared off. Black seems more macho but in fact is getting the worst of it.

Green bloodies Black's nose. I am amazed. No trash talking, not one curse. When it is obvious that Black is losing, his friends step in and pull him away. Green's friends do likewise, and the two groups walk away from each other. This mano a mano is chivalric, Old World, a solitary tangle. In New York or Manila this would have erupted into a furious melee and somebody would have been seriously injured.

Taking a cab to the Cagliari airport before dawn to commence the bone-wearying journey to New York, Ravi and I leave behind Evan to catch more winks before his later flight. Ravi notices heavily made-up women by the roadside, spaced apart, lit by the cab's lights and the fire each one has going, to keep warm. Prostitutes, says our driver. From Africa. Modern-day sirens, proferring themselves to every Ulysses (more Joycean than Homeric) wending his way home, devoutly seeking consummation.

These women may have left Africa, but Africa will never leave them.

LUIS H. FRANCIA Novelist, Poet, Essayist



I knew I had to shake handsbut then, which hand?

#### **CAROLINE KENNEDY**

To me there is something intriguing about people who have grown up in very different backgrounds from my own. I have spent many decades trying to experience the lives of many of them-indigenous people, war refugees, people with disabilities and displaced people. And when I married, I was delighted to find out that my husband, the Filipino artist Ben Cabrera (BenCab), shared this same fascination. Whereas I used them as subjects for my writing, he used them as subjects for his photographs and paintings.

A few years before I met him, he had already established an artist/model relationship with a scavenger in Tondo, the squatter area of Manila, where he had been brought up. His muse's name was "Sabel" and she spent her days wandering through Manila's downtown streets rummaging through gutters, rubbish piles, and garbage bins in an endless search for discarded plastic bags that she used as clothes. Every day her appearance changed. Like some living sculpture, she added, or discarded bags of all colors shapes and sizes so that her contours too, continuously evolved. The artist in Ben could not resist. Through his exhibited work and, most currently, through the musical based on her fictional story, "Sabel" became a celebrity in her own right. Everyone in Manila's art circles knew her. It always struck me as ironic that some of the richest, most prominent, families in the Philippines had paintings of the penniless scavenger "Sabel" hanging on their living room walls.

One day when the circus was in town, Ben suggested we check out the "freak" show. I was hesitant, never having visited one before and not knowing quite what to expect.

But, out of curiosity, I agreed to go along. And that's when I met the "Octopus Man."

I remember clearly my first encounter with him. I remember feeling nauseated, of wanting to turn away my face, to run away and hide, pretend he didn't exist. I didn't want to stare at him. I didn't want to appear rude, and I didn't want to make him feel uncomfortable. Oddly, I realized later, it was only me who felt uneasy because, as he told me, he was so used to people staring at him that it no longer bothered him.

"That's why I am here, after all, Caroline," he said. "For people to look at, to wonder on, to pity and to jeer."

The "Octopus Man" was, in fact, only a teenage boy and part of a circus sideshow in Caloocan, Philippines. I had already walked through a tent containing Siamese twins joined at the head, been greeted by their weeping mother, been told there was nothing that could be done, that no operation that could ever save them.

I had already met "Little Lucy." At only 18 inches, this tiny person told me she was proud of her poster title, "The World's Smallest Woman." She, in turn, had introduced me to a giant, Carlos, all 7 feet 8 inches of him although unfortunately, he said, he could not claim to be the world's tallest man for that title currently belonged to an American.

Carlos the Giant was obviously very fond of Little Lucy. He scooped her up and cradled her gently in the palm of his left hand as though she was a porcelain doll, tickling her tiny ribs with his right index finger to make her laugh. And when he placed her back on the floor beside me, he did so with great care, making sure she didn't stumble.

Little Lucy reached up, took me by the hand and led me to her "boudoir." In contrast to the other room where she had to be picked up and placed on the sofa, here everything was in miniature—chairs, dressing table, bed—all handcrafted to suit her diminutive size. I had no choice but to sit on the floor. I was not sure at that moment whether I even wanted to stay.

Little Lucy saw my discomfort, felt me searching for a way out. Her tiny hand pointed to the tent flap.

"There," she said, "you can leave if you want."

She smiled at me.

"But I would like you to stay because I want you to meet my friend, Ramon."

It seemed I had no choice so I smiled back.

"It's OK, really," I tried to sound more confident than I felt. "It's just that..."

"I know," she nodded, "you've never done this before?"

I had to admit it was my first visit to any "freak" show. And now here I was back-

stage meeting the so-called "freaks."

The mere word "freak" upset me. Didn't it upset her? I asked.

"I'm used to it," she replied. "I probably don't think of it the same way as you do. And what else would I be able I do?"

I had to agree there were few options open for someone like Little Lucy.

Answering her own question she continued, "I could sit at home, hide from the world, feel sorry for myself or I could be part of this family, seek attention, have people look at me, talk about me, photograph me and perhaps," she winked mischievously, "end up on television and be famous."

"It's possible," I answered, "but would you want that?"

"Carlos (the Giant) was on television once. He said he liked it, said I should go on with him next time," she laughed, a tinkling high-pitched laugh, "but I don't think my mother would let me—and my little sister would be very jealous!"

Her laugh was contagious, I found myself joining in, feeling more relaxed. "Freaks," it seemed, had a sense of humor, something I'd never thought about before. I was startled and somewhat ashamed by my reaction. Why should they be any different from us? Why should they not love, laugh, cry, sense, feel, and live like us? After all, the only reason they had to join a circus sideshow or a "freak" show was to make an honest living like the rest of us, not to depend on others to support them.

"Shall we go meet Ramon?" Little Lucy's voice interrupted my thoughts. She jumped down from her chair and walked towards me. Taking my hand she drew me up off the dirt floor and I followed her out of the tent.

"Who is he, this Ramon?" I asked as we strolled across the grass, passing tents on either side of us.

"Ramon? Oh, he's the "Octopus Man," she smiled, waving her hand at a male torso, no arms, no legs, sitting propped up by pillows against the wheels of a dilapidated caravan.

"Bring your friend round to meet me, Lucy," the torso shouted to our retreating backs.

Lucy turned, waved again, "Later, Ricky, we're off to see Ramon right now!"

I soon discovered that either I had to slow down my normal walking pace or Little Lucy had to run in order to keep up with me. I decided on the former, after all she was supposed to be leading the way. I finally paced it to take one step to her four. She giggled when she saw me concentrating.

"I don't mind running," she said, "it's good for the figure. We little people tend to put on weight easily, you know."

Again, something else I'd never thought

of. I had already learnt a lot this day, I told her, and there would be many more lessons, I felt sure, by the end of the day—humility, compassion, respect, and the hardest one of all, stepping outside my natural comfort zone.

"Oh, Caroline, you sound so serious," she mimicked. "Life is one long lesson, didn't you know? Just remember to laugh whenever you can. That's what I do."

Little Lucy what a plucky lady you are, I thought. And aloud I asked, "How many Little Lucys are there in the world?" It seemed to me that every freak show had their only Little Lucy.

"Oh many," she giggled, twisting her long dark hair in ringlets around her fingers, "and I'm in contact with most of them...
They call me the original but I'm not really..." She looked up at me, "Guess how old I am?"

Now this was something I hadn't considered. How old could she be? By her size she would only be two or three, a mere toddler. By her looks she could be in her teens. By her coquettishness she could be in her twenties. And by her wisdom, she could be a wise old woman. It was impossible to tell. I shrugged my shoulders, nonplussed.

"Come on, guess!" she commanded, enjoying the moment immensely. "You must have some idea!"

"Not a clue," I said and told her the reasons I found it hard.

"Just a little guess... please," she pleaded. "Well, let's see," I frowned, "25?"

Little Lucy laughed out loud. She shouted to an elderly woman bent double over a laundry tub.

"Hey, Beatriz," she shouted. "My friend here thinks I'm 25!"

The old woman turned. I expected her to straighten up but she didn't. She shouted back, her eyes staring not at Little Lucy but at the ground at her feet. I realized then Beatriz must have a crippling spinal disability and was unable stand up straight, her whole life spent looking at the ground.

"What does your friend know about age?" Beatriz laughed, "What does your friend know about suffering? What does your friend know about anything?" She turned back to the laundry tub, plunging her hands into the soapy water.

"Beatriz is not an old woman," Little Lucy whispered, "simply a defeated one. She's only 38 but has lived on the street all her life. Her parents didn't want her. Her family didn't want her. Her friends didn't want her. Nobody wanted her. So she came here, only a few months ago. Now she's one of us."

I looked back at Beatriz. I was glad she had found a home with people who cared.

"So, how old are you?" I asked.

"The same age as Beatriz," Little Lucy



Plural, 2015

laughed her tinkling high-pitched laugh again. It was hard not to laugh with her. "That surprised you, didn't it?"

It certainly had. I walked ahead thinking about how I came to be in this place with these strange people. I felt Little Lucy tug at my jeans.

"Here... we're here!" she announced, steering me towards a tent with a primitive sign announcing in large red painted letters "Come Inside-See The Octopus Man." Beside it was a crudely painted image of a man's head superimposed on the body of an octopus. I hesitated, drew in a deep breath. I was not sure I wanted to go inside. Little Lucy grabbed my hand and pulled me towards the tent entrance.

"Come on," she said. "You'll like him, I promise... You won't regret it." She disappeared inside and I felt compelled to follow.

Seated on a wooden bench at the far side of the tent was something terrible. Could it be a visual trick, I wondered. Was this for real? Please, I begged to myself, don't let it be for real. Meanwhile, Little Lucy was rushing forward, grabbing the thing's legs, the thing's three legs. I felt sick, I wasn't sure I wanted to see more.

"Here Caroline... this is Ramon... Ramon, this is Caroline!" she beamed, still hugging his legs. The thing bent over and kissed the top of her head.

I knew I had to shake hands-but then, which hand? This Ramon had three arms as well as three legs. But he was smiling at me and holding out one of his hands. With another he scooped up Little Lucy placing her on his lap. The third arm hung limply at his side. Lucy wriggled coquettishly, still beaming. Was this love, I wondered? I stepped forward and shook the extended hand. By now I was feeling quite ill and desperately wanted to make a swift exit.

"Please sit down," Ramon said, pointing one of his arms towards a chair. Feeling faint, I was happy to oblige, to get my breath back, to refocus my attention. I could hardly bring myself to look at him and from what he said to me, I knew he instinctively felt my discomfort.

"I cannot say I am sorry for the way I look," he said. "That is how I am. I cannot help it and I cannot do anything about it. Doesn't the Bible say, be thankful for all God's mercies?"

"I'm afraid I am not too familiar with the Bible," I answered, forcing a smile, "I'm not religious."

"I understand," Ramon smiled back. "Nor am I really... but it does have some things to say that are helpful to live by. Love thy neighbour as you love yourself."

"I bet Caroline is wondering how you can love yourself, Ramon," Little Lucy giggled, snuggling up to him.

Again I felt distinctly uncomfortable. She was absolutely right, of course, but I wouldn't want to admit it, least of all to Ramon.

"It's easy, Caroline," Ramon's smile widened. "People tell me I'm special. I'm different but I'm special."

"And we like being special, don't we?" Little Lucy interrupted.

Ramon nodded. "I'm just 17 but I'm the only boy in my class who has a job."

"Yes, he's earning money here to put himself through college, I'm so proud of him." Little Lucy beamed again. "He's a top grader in his school."

I now realized this was more a motherson relationship rather than a boyfriendgirlfriend one. My nausea was beginning to dissipate, my head starting to clear. Again I was faced with something revelatory. The Octopus Man not only attended a normal school but outshone his classmates. He was earning money to go to college. He would probably do well, be a high achiever. Little Lucy had every right to feel proud. No wonder she wanted me to meet him.

Aloud I said, "I'm really impressed, Ramon. Congratulations. What are your favourite subjects?"

"History, politics... and I love geography," he answered. "I want to read about people I will never meet and places I will never visit." He grinned at me. "Lucy tells me you're a traveller. Tell me about the places you've been."

"Oh, yes please, Caroline!" Little Lucy clapped her tiny hands.

And so I did. And they were a rapt audience, their eyes widening when I recounted vignettes of my recent trip across East Germany, Poland, Russia and Siberia, Japan, and Hong Kong, their smiles broadening when I described my experiences since arriving in the Philippines. Every time I hesitated, Little Lucy clapped her tiny hands and shouted, "More!"

And so it went on, a long afternoon we spent together. BenCab eventually joined us after spending time photographing many of the subjects in and around the circus. Ramon gleaned as much information from me as he could, repeatedly asking questions, gaining knowledge. Occasionally he would shake his head solemnly, whispering, "I'll never see that for myself!" And Little Lucy would reply, "Oh, yes you will Ramon, you really will! Remember what we agreed?"

And Ramon would smile, "Yes, Lucy, you're right. I will."

Towards the end of the afternoon I felt comfortable enough to ask Ramon about his extra limbs.

"Ah," he joked. "You're no different from all the rest. You want to see them, don't you?"

I felt embarrassed. I had been caught out. "I simply want to know you better," I said, "I want to understand what you have to live with on a daily basis."

"So that you can feel pity for me, so that you can feel fortunate for yourself, is that it?" Ramon sounded disappointed for the first time.

"No, that's not what I meant at all. I'm sorry." I hoped I hadn't hurt his feelings. In my confusion what I said had come out all wrong. I merely meant I was curious to know how he remained so positive living with the kind of terrible disability he had. I still couldn't begin to understand it. But nor, it seems, could I explain myself without sounding offensive.

I apologized again.

"No worries," Ramon smiled. "I understand." He started unbuttoning his shirt and trousers, revealing the source of his disability. An extra arm extended from below his right armpit, an extra leg hung limply from below his belly button. And, high up on his chest, just below his left collarbone, an extra ear protruded surrounded by a mass of black hair.

"Meet my twin, Rafael," Ramon said.

I thought I was fully prepared for a shock but discovered then that I wasn't. My head reeled. I thought I was going to faint.

Sensing my discomfort, Ramon asked, "Aren't you going to ask me if I can have



I am the World, 2011

them surgically removed, that's what people usually ask?"

"No," I stuttered, "that's not what I was going to ask you. But, now that you've mentioned it, would you? Could you?"

Ramon looked at me. "The answer to your second question is 'yes, apparently it's surgically possible' but the answer to your first question is 'no.' This is my twin brother and I couldn't destroy him. He lives with me, I live with him. We live our lives together, forever."

The lessons I was learning that afternoon were almost too much to absorb. I knew I would have to leave Ramon, Rafael, Carlos the Giant, Beatriz, Ricky the Living Torso, and Little Lucy soon in order to collect my thoughts, think about what I had seen and heard, imagine myself in their world-how I would live my life, what my attitude would be, how I would cope. They had done so much for me, opened my eyes to so many things I had simply blotted out before as just too painful, too pitiful, or too unpalatable. They had helped me lose my fear of the unfamiliar, taught me to accept the unacceptable, broken down my natural barriers. With them I had met human beings with every conceivable physical aberration and yet it was me, me who was supposed to be "normal", who felt distinctly "different".

But what had I done for them? A simple answer-nothing. Yes, for one brief moment, I had transported them to other worlds, given them glimpses of places they would surely never see, introduced them to people they would surely never meet. That thought made me sad. I had gone through the gamut of emotions that afternoon with them. I had felt perplexed, awed, disheartened, fearful, sickened, inspired, happy, and now I felt an overwhelming sadness, not for them but for myself. But what right had I to feel sad when faced with these exceptional lives? Later, back in my own room, I reflected on what Little Lucy had said: "Just remember to laugh whenever you can. That's what I do!"

I smiled. At that moment I knew they would be OK, those two, Little Lucy and the "Octopus Man," they were survivors, they were special, they would definitely be OK.

CAROLINE KENNEDY Journalist and essayist

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# THE PASS PASS OF PIOL PIOL

Interviewed by Philbert Dy Photographed by Geric Cruz

At 38 and after two decades in the public eye, the most successful actor of his generation reflects on his career and craft, fatherhood and fame, and his longing for the occasional anonymity.

Produced by Jerome Gomez Styled by Ton Lao and Mark Combe Grooming by Donald Magbojos



# I think I've come to the point in my life where I can say, "I think I've done enough." I've done more than enough. But if God is going to take me some place else, I won't mind. But for now, damn, man... never in my wildest dreams would I have thought I'd get this far.

**I've learned to appreciate** my craft, surprisingly, after being in the industry for half of my life. I don't know if it was an epiphany, but I felt so much more passion for what I was doing when I saw my movie, *The Breakup Playlist*. I saw my drive on screen, and I wasn't awkward anymore. When I watched myself, I thought of how I understood the script.

My appreciation for the craft has gotten deeper, and I have this renewed excitement. It comes with age and experience, I guess.

All those years that I was working, I just got through it because I had to. I had to deliver because I was getting paid to do so. I don't want to say that I just winged it, because it entailed a lot of hard work and long hours. But I guess what drove me through was the passion that I didn't know I had in me. *Siguro* I just have a better understanding of what I'm doing now.

I want to be the best that I can be, maximize my potential, to realize my purpose and understand why I look like this, or I live like this, or why I'm here. I want to be able to maximize that full knowledge of how far I can go, and where I can go 100 percent. I'm very ambitious that way.

I didn't get to finish college because I went to the States. I did odd jobs. I was a security guard and a hospital clerk. I would only earn \$1,200 a month and my overhead monthly bills were \$1,300. I had to pay for my car, my insurance, the utilities, and rent. So when I was 21, I told my mom I wanted to go back to the Philippines because it would be easier for me to land a job in showbiz here because I'm a Filipino and can speak the language. The States was

too big for me, too cocked out, and I was fogged, fresh off the boat—so I was really intimidated. I guess that's why I came back to Manila, to pursue something I didn't know I was even going to be successful in. It was all just gut. Cut to almost 20 years later, I realize that I love what I do.

I knew I could bank on my appearance. I'm not dumb.

My mother taught me values. She instilled so many good values in us growing up: the value of family, of hard work, of professionalism. She made sure that we grew up humble and appreciative of what we had, to work hard and be patient, and not use or step on anyone; just to be the best that we could be in whatever we did. I was a mama's boy.

I didn't have that kind of solid relationship with my dad because I was very young when he left. [When I was] a kid, he was very strict, [but] he never laid a hand on my mom. That's one thing I can say. That's why I can't hurt a girl because I never saw my dad hurt my mom. That's one good thing about him. He has so much respect for women.

I understand women. They are the bearer of your kids, and they wait for you at home, and they're patient. I've learned to appreciate women even more when I became a father. I realized how many sacrifices they have to go through when they have kids, and I love how noble that is. It's their pature.

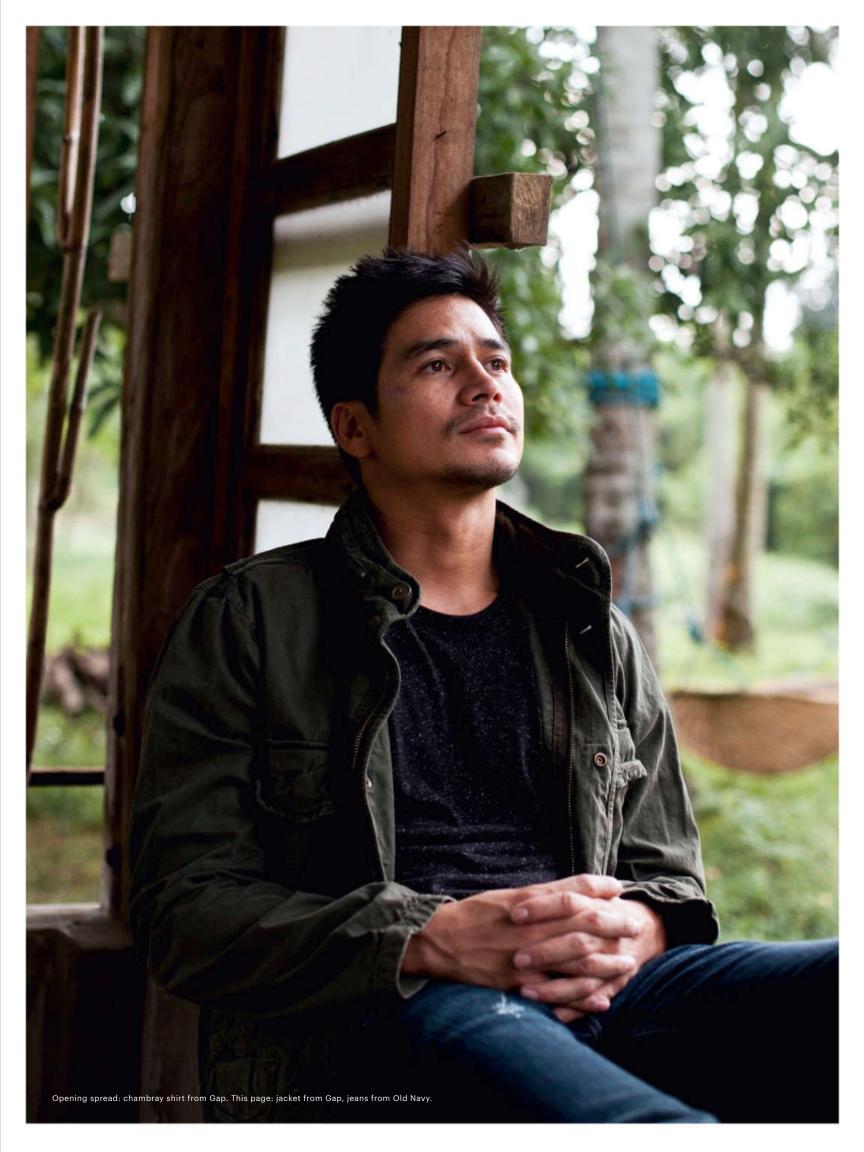
I've been thinking about how my son has changed me as a person—not just as a father. It's so humbling to see your son and to try to instill the right values and to want

to make him [into] a good person... but you can't, you know? You can only do so much. It hurts me, and it bothers me when I don't know where he is, what he's doing, or who he's with. But as much as it hurts, that's how you become a person, a human being for that matter, because at the end of the day, it's his choice. I don't want to put my reins around him because I want him to be independent. I want him to be the best person that he can be, so I have to let him go. That's what I realized. He's made me accept the fact that he's not mine. Di ba? They're just ours for some time. But you can't always be present in their lives. You can't force your son to be with you physically 24/7 because that's being unfair. That's being selfish.

Courage means risking something without being sure what the outcome is. Courage is going for something that will either make you or break you, but just going for it anyway because it's what drives you. That's courage.

Doing Dekada '70 [for me, was a courageous choice]. I was playing a rebel, an activist. And you have Christopher de Leon and Vilma Santos as your parents, with Chito Roño as the director. I was very insecure. I was so scared. I was really, really intimidated. I didn't know what to do. But I guess courage was what drove me to do it. Otherwise, if left to myself, I don't think I would have been able to do the roles I've done.

HELE SA HIWAGANG HAPIS WAS ONE OF THE HARDEST ROLES I'VE DONE, but I enjoyed it. I really, really enjoyed it. Because everything was take one. Everything was so fast, so you have to keep up with the pace of direk Lav [Diaz]. And then you're also working with





John Lloyd, or other seasoned actors, and this might be the only chance that you can do such a thing. So I was just there; I was present, but I was intimidated the whole time. I was scared.

**Everything intimidates me.** But that's what drives me.

If there's anyone that I'd like to portray for a biopic, it's Marcos. I find him very interesting. I want to know what drove him to do what he did to our country—if it was born out of greed, or money, or whatever... because he was a brilliant guy.

I'm drawn to visionaries, people that have dreams, people that make things happen. Because we are all human beings, and they were able to be a cut above the rest. They went further. How I wish I could do the same thing. Nothing should limit us.

I'm a realist. I love fantasy, I'm a fan of movies, but it's all fiction. It's all makebelieve. It's all imagination. Maybe some of the things that we imagine are true, but more often than not, we are just imagining.

Ever since I became a Christian, my relationship with the Lord has become more intense and personal. I've developed a per-

sonal relationship with the Lord. I always go back to the Bible. I pray everyday, at just about anytime I want to: when I ask for something, or I want to thank him for something. That's how present he is in my life. Even if I'm single or living alone, I don't feel alone because the Lord is always there.

I've read the Bible more than five times, from beginning to end. That's the only book that I keep reading. That's why I stopped reading other books.

Religion is a tradition. For me, what I've learned about becoming a Christian is developing a personal relationship with the Lord. It's not necessarily a religion. Religion for me is doing the things the church asks you to do.

There are a lot of places I haven't seen that I want to go back to, like Ibiza. I'm going next week, so I'm excited. I'm excited

ing next week, so I'm excited. I'm excited to see Europe because it humbles me. It brings me back to the ground. It makes me realize, "Hey, the whole world doesn't necessarily know you. The Philippines is a small island, so get real."

The concrete jungle annoys me. Urban sounds annoy me.

The things that I have learned in my life are based on what I've experienced and gone through. So, I've learned to be humble at all times because whatever I have is not my own doing. It's just a blessing from the Lord, or a reward—a gift—because of hard work.

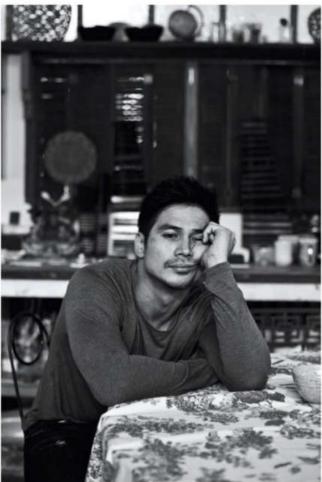
I think I've come to the point in my life

where I can say, "I think I've done enough." I've done more than enough. But if God is going to take me some place else, I won't mind. But for now, damn, man... never in my wildest dreams would I have thought I'd get this far. To land a cover shoot, a leading role, to be producing movies, wow... I never thought of these things.

For my last meal, I'd do the buffet. I'd go to Sofitel. I won't limit myself to just one dish. It's my last meal so I'm going to eat a lot, and I'm going to eat slowly so that I can eat some more.

I love being here in the Philippines, but I wouldn't mind the anonymity that I [had] in the States. What I would do to not feel so restricted—to go to malls, to certain places, shop for a car—have that freedom. [To] go to Dangwa or 168 or wherever I want without getting mobbed... those things. ■





Pullover from Bershka.





Photographed in Alfonso, Cavite Special thanks to Ling Quisumbing Ramilo

## The Legends of Lav Diaz

The filmmaker appropriates nature to fit his narratives, seizing life itself to mold his art. Joining him in crossing the threshold of history and mythology are three men, Pepe, Piolo and John Lloyd.

Esquire bears witness to the difficult completion of his latest epic Hele sa Hiwagang Hapis.

By Philbert Dy Photographs by Geloy Concepcion





In Diaz's new opus, the heroes of *El Filibusterismo* come alive in a world where the Rizal novel exists. Opposite page: (top) actors Ely Buendia and John Lloyd Cruz read lines with assistant director Hazel Orencio; (bottom) Bernardo Bernardo

av Diaz did not expect to be in a Starbucks. He generally does not expect to be in a Starbucks. Part of the legend of Lav Diaz is that days or even weeks before a shoot starts, he will set off on his own to some place near the location to write, usually some small, dark town in the middle of nowhere, preferably where the seedier elements of society may be found. Balanga is nothing like that.

"I can't write in Manila," he says. "I can't be too comfortable." His choice of accommodations reinforces the statement. He is staying at the Elison, a hotel in name, but a motel in spirit. It's clean enough, but it does recall the kind of place one might see in a movie as the location of an illicit tryst; the kind that usually ends up in a bloody confrontation.

As the director of what is now a major motion picture starring two of the biggest names in the country, Lav Diaz could certainly be staying some place nicer. But that is not who Lav Diaz is. Or at least, that's not what we want him to be. The legend of Lav Diaz is of a man who rejected the trappings of the industry as a whole; the man who forged a whole new way of doing things. Whereas other filmmakers were either selling out to the big players or waiting to hear

word from the grant-giving bodies that their ideas were worthy of a pittance, Lav Diaz just went out there on his own with a camera, pouring all his life into projects that would hardly ever be seen by people.

"My cinema is free," he says without a hint of irony. Not that there's any actual room for irony. Lav Diaz lives up to his legend. He isn't doing what anyone else is doing.

And so he is in Balanga, Bataan, living up to the stories about him. He has spent the last three days learning that Balanga isn't the backwater that he thought it was. It's a vibrant little city with a shopping mall made to look like a Spanish-era building. At almost every corner, there are coffee shops filled with young people paying for overpriced drinks. And Lav Diaz has found himself in one of those coffee shops. A Starbucks, no less. The last three days of discovery have been fruitful. He has written over 40 new pages of script, and he is waiting for the coffee shop's terrible WiFi to send it back to Manila.

This script was actually written a long time ago. It was a project pitched for the centennial commission, the government committee formed to find worthy pieces of artistic expression for the hundredth year of Filipino freedom. It was originally called *Ang Dakilang Desaparecido*, and was

solely inspired by the journals of Gregoria de Jesus during the 30 days that she spent looking for the corpse of Andres Bonifacio. Several films were greenlit by the centennial commission, but through the arcane politicking involved in such endeavors, only one ended up actually being made.

And so the script was shelved. Lav Diaz instead went on to become the mythological being that he is, the wandering filmmaker putting together epic-length films that were being praised all around the world. Everyone serious about cinema in the country came to know of him, even when they had never seen any of his films, or ever had the chance to see one. His name would often be invoked as a joke, shorthand for the kind of filmmaker whose films were never going to be seen by anyone. But even in derision, there was always a hint of admiration. Diaz, after all, was the guy doing what no one had the courage to do.

The legend grew. Diaz continued to make films that seemed to capture the imagination of cinephiles all around the world, If not quite in the Philippines, He garnered international acclaim which reached its peak with the release of *Norte, Hangganan ng Kasaysayan* a hit at Cannes that found its way to several serious lists for the best films of 2013. And while Lav Diaz was admired before, the success and





relative accessibility of *Norte* seemed to legitimize him in the eyes of a certain set. It allowed for things that were previously unthinkable. As of this writing, his 2014 film *Mula sa Kung Ano Ang Noon* is enjoying a weeklong commercial run in a major shopping center. It's just one cinema, but it's no

Lloyd Cruz expressed interest in working with him, he saw it as an opportunity to work something new into the old material. He took inspiration from *El Filibusterismo*, which Diaz considers a masterwork of political thought. "It's not a great novel," he says, "but it's a complete vision of what

### To be with Diaz in these few, crucial days before a shoot is to witness an endless stream of creation...

joke to devote a theater to a five-and-a-half hour black-and-white movie.

And just as unthinkable: Lav Diaz working with Star Cinema. Diaz dusted off the old script after being approached by producer Paul Soriano, who just wanted to see the filmmaker work. And it just so happened that John Lloyd Cruz wanted to work with Diaz as well. And somewhere in pre-production, as Diaz was reworking the script with his new sensibilities, he had thought of Piolo Pascual as someone perfect for a role he had written. And so they reached out to him, and Pascual met them with enthusiasm. Working with Cruz and Pascual means having to deal with Star Cinema, who holds them under contract.

"We didn't think we'd get Piolo," says assistant director Hazel Orencio. "We were already telling Lav we might have to recast, but he told us it would all work out."

"Lav was so sure," she says.

Surprisingly, it did. In exchange for allowing the production to borrow their contracted talent, Star Cinema took local distribution rights for the film. And so now, Star Cinema, an outfit that has a revenue target of over a billion pesos, is in charge of releasing what is probably going to be a five-to-six hour black-and-white period film directed by Lav Diaz. It should likely be noted that it is a film they know little about, because even Lav Diaz doesn't exactly know what the film is going to be. That's why he's in Bataan a week early. That's why he was in Sorsogon for nearly a month before production actually started there. He's still finding the film, drawing in the mystical energies that come with wandering strange places and channeling them into writing.

From an outsider's perspective, it all seems absurd. But nothing has really changed for Lav Diaz. For now, he is still working like he always does. He is in an unfamiliar city, staying in a pretty cheap hotel, writing the script as it comes to him. He is in a Starbucks, but that feels like an accident

The movie is now titled *Hele sa Hiwagang Hapis*. "When I reread the script, I didn't like it anymore," Lav says. And when John

needs to be done for the nation."

"You read it, and it still feels relevant. What Pepe was writing about over a hundred years ago are still problems we're facing today."

"Pepe," of course, refers to Jose Rizal. Lav does not talk about him like a distant historical figure. He refers to him casually, like a friend he was just talking to minutes ago.

The movie attempts to fill a hole in the last chapters of *El Filibusterismo*. It very loosely fills in the time between the failure of Simoun's plot and his eventual death. But it isn't quite that simple, either. In the film, Simoun and Isagani are in a world where *El Filibusterismo* exists, and they refer to it and other works of Jose Rizal in their various conversations.

"I'm creating a discourse between history and our mythology," Diaz explains. "Back during revolutionary days, everyone really believed in the legends. The rebels really believed that Bernardo Carpio would come to save them." Bernardo Carpio is a mythological giant, said to be the cause of earthquakes. In the film, there are several conversations with *tikbalang* that make reference to Carpio as a very real threat to the stability of the Spanish regime.

It sounds bizarre, but when Diaz is explaining it, it feels completely natural. Conversations with Lav seem to blur the distinction between what is real and what isn't. It is only when one gets farther away that the lines become clear again, and the strangeness of his ideas reemerges. It is far outside the bounds of conventional cinema to say the least.

"I don't like limits," he says. "I don't like the idea that there is a set way of telling stories, and that's what we have to do." He admits to never thinking about the audience when he makes a film. "That only leads to compromise."

"My cinema is free," he repeats. He says this a lot, because it is true. Even with just a few days before he actually starts shooting here in Bataan, he is still not bound to the limits of a finished script. One night, inspiration strikes. "Some threads popped up," he says. "I won't deny them." The next day, there are nine new pages of monologue. One can almost imagine Lav in his room in conversation with his old friend Pepe, their mystical discourse fueling the creation of all these words. He sends the new pages off to everyone that needs them, and the film continues to take shape.

To be with Diaz in these few, crucial days before a shoot is to witness an endless stream of creation, the filmmaker seemingly drawing inspiration from the air itself, producing an incredible volume of beautifully written lines that would take anyone else months to put together.

t is easy to see Lav Diaz as a mythical figure, but he is, of course, a human being. Weeks ago, he took a tumble which left him with tendonitis in his shoulder. It's been bothering him for a while, and he's hardly been able to sleep through the pain.

"I went to the doctor already, but he just gave me an injection and a prescription for painkillers. It hasn't gotten better."

A manghihilot arrives in Balanga from Marikina, and Lav spends the morning gritting his teeth through the intense, concentrated kneading of his battle-damaged body parts. He sleeps through the afternoon, and emerges with his shoulder feeling somewhat better. But he will continue to live with the discomfort over the next few days of shooting.

he first bit of news that came out about this movie was the involvement of Piolo Pascual and John Lloyd Cruz, two big stars with long careers working within the mainstream system. Both have made forays into less commercial work, but working with Lav is a completely different thing.

He doesn't really give his actors a lot of instruction. He basically just tells them where the limits of the frame are, and has them fend for themselves. And since Lav often shoots very long takes of uninterrupted dialogue and action, this can be a real challenge.

"On the first day, I was lost," Cruz admits. "I started thinking, 'am I just dumb?" Did I make a mistake in wanting to do this film?"

"It felt like I didn't know how to do anything anymore. I'd be picking up a glass and it would feel unnatural."

"I didn't make any adjustments for them," Lav says. "This is how I work. I told them to set their acting free."

"I really pushed them on the first day. I wanted them to get used to it."

"They were able to adjust. They're actu-

ally really good. They memorize lines really quickly, and their training has given them a really good instinct for blocking."

Lav Diaz is in Starbucks again. Assistant director Hazel Orencio has arrived in Balanga as well, and is helping him put together the schedule for the final two days of shooting. They have a lot of sequences to get through.

"The only thing that's different about working with mainstream actors is adjusting to their schedules, Lav says. "A lot of these scenes, we should have been able to get in Sorsogon. But we couldn't get the two together."

"I'd like to stretch this out more, but Piolo has to leave by lunchtime Saturday. And shooting in Las Casas is expensive. We could only afford two days."

Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar is a resort in Bagac, Bataan. In recent years, it has become the place to shoot period Filipino films. It is kind of like a historical theme park, its owners buying old houses from across the country and transplanting them to the resort and renting them out as hotel rooms. It is probably the only place left in the Philippines where a production can shoot a period picture without worrying about running into anachronistic details. This comes at a hefty price, of course.

The two quickly cobble together a schedule. The process is unusually relaxed. Lav isn't even looking at a script as he decides which sequences need to be prioritized. Occasionally, Orencio will bring up that they won't have an actor for that day, or that someone won't be arriving until late. And Lav will adjust. Orencio jots this all down in her notebook.

The first day is looking heavy. "I usually wouldn't put that many sequences in one day," Lav says. "I don't think there's a point to exhausting the crew. You won't get very good work out of them."

Back in Sorsogon, on the banks of Lake Bulusan, the people who hadn't worked with Lav before were always surprised that they'd end so early. Some of the 1,017-person crew, seasoned professionals who have worked in the mainstream, would tell Lav that it was the first shoot where they got a regular eight hours of sleep every night.

"The way the industry does things just isn't good for anybody. But we've all gotten used to working ourselves to exhaustion. I don't want to do that. If I see that people are getting tired, I tell everyone to pack up."

These next few days will apparently be different. But if Lav is worried at all, he isn't showing it. Later, director of photography Larry Manda arrives. The heaviness of the schedule never comes up. They're already talking about the next film they want to shoot together: a noir film set in a rainy provincial town.

av is looking for a river. Part of the scenes he wasn't able to shoot back in Sorsogon involves Simoun and Isagani on a little boat, escaping authorities by going through

the wilderness. He and his skeleton crew head out to Morong. The maps indicate that there are little streams in the area that could be appropriate for the scenes.

The search takes the better part of the day. Along the way, the crew picks up a young woman who works at one of the many resorts in the area. She agrees to help in exchange for a ride to town. She says she hasn't really been to the rivers nearby, but her friends tell her they're just down the road

Later she's asking about the production. Lav tells her that he's a location scout for a small, independent movie starring Bernardo Bernardo and Cherie Gil. The young woman doesn't question this at all. She reveals that she's originally from Dagupan, and Lav starts spinning tales about people he knows from the area. As the service van passes through more of the Bataan landscape, Lav delivers history lessons about the great, bloody battles that took place in the area.

The first stream is underwhelming, as is the second. "We should go back to Bulusan," Lav says to Manda. "That place was really perfect." Clearly, Lav has already seen the perfect place in his mind, and whatever they get out of Morong will be a step down.

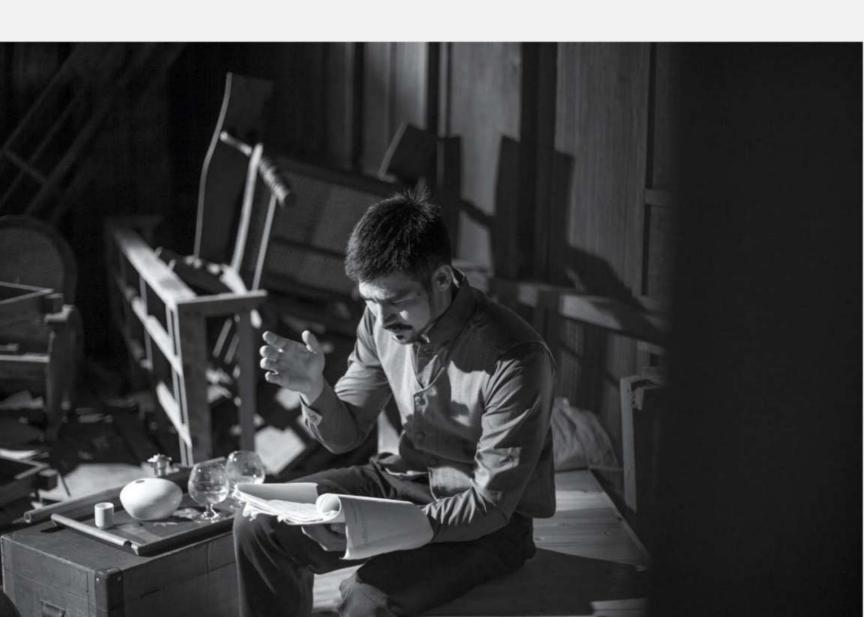
Eventually, Lav finds a small, muddy riverbank by a quarry that suits his needs. The caretaker of the property doesn't seem too





Cherie Gil and Angel Aquino play tikbalangs in this mystical story.

Below: Piolo Pascual hard at work on his lines as Simoun.



happy with the sudden arrival of all these strange people, but Lav just strides through while Orencio politely explains what's going on.

Lav doesn't seem entirely happy with the place, but it will have to do.

Later that day, he arrives in Las Casas. He can't officially shoot there until the next day, when the rest of the crew arrives, but Lav's guerilla instincts kick in. He tells the Las Casas staff that he just wants to get a test in, the lack of a large crew lending credence to his explanation. Of course, this is just the way Lav usually shoots, with a small, tight crew of people who often double as cast members. The people at the resort are only really used to large, elaborate productions, and think nothing of the scene being set up. He casts Orencio's uncle as a Frenchman walking the streets of Paris, in what will be an attempt to recreate the

duration of the shoot. They're shooting a small scene where Simoun and Isagani are on their boat heading to shore. But the ocean isn't cooperating, so Lav quickly changes the scene. He moves the scene to a nearby river opening, and has the characters rowing out towards the ocean before being told that the waves are too choppy to continue.

This doesn't quite go right, either. The opening of the river, as it turns out, is too shallow for the boat. Lav thinks for a moment, and says, "We'll just appropriate that." He instructs the actor playing the boatman to get out of the boat and pull it to shore.

"That's good. Now we can see the struggle."

"Appropriate" is a word that Lav uses a lot. Whenever the world doesn't cooperate with his original vision, he uses whatever vegetables. In a restaurant the other night, Lav was told that the only vegetarian dish they had was a *pako* salad. When it arrived at the table, it had salted duck eggs all over it.

Lav has a banana and just smiles through everything.

"It's much harder for me," says Kints Kintana, a longtime collaborator of Lav. "I have so much more to keep track of. Usually it's just ten of us in a van. It's so much more stressful to take care of all this."

And so details are missed, and the director ends up having a banana for breakfast.

The difficulty in handling such a large production is felt once again when the crew moves to Morong, to the little river an hour away from Las Casas. Lav intended the shoot there to last maybe twenty minutes, to get in and out before anyone noticed they were there. But in the rush to get

# Word gets out that there were big stars hanging around the side of the road. This catches the attention of local government officials, who then come around asking for permits. Lav's cinema is free, but it's becoming clear that this production is not.

original cinematographs of the Lumiere brothers for a party scene late in the film.

The day goes quickly. The footage, though shot with hardly any planning, comes out remarkable. It actually does feel like it could have been shot a century ago. Orencio's uncle makes for a surprisingly credible French workman, and Lav and his crew manage to get three solid takes in a little under an hour.

This is as close as Lav will get to shooting like he usually does. The next day, the crew, the equipment, the stars and dozens of extras arrive. And there isn't a whole lot of time.

Before leaving Las Casas that day, Lav is recognized by some of the resort's visitors. They don't know his name exactly, but they know they've seen him on TV, receiving an award. Lav laughs the experience off. He tells them that he's shooting here in the resort with John Lloyd Cruz and Piolo Pascual, and he takes the opportunity to explain the complicated premise of his film. His newfound fans nod excitedly as he explains how his film exists in the intersection between history and mythology. They've never actually seen any of his films, but they promise that they'll see this one.

he first shot is at the crack of dawn at the nearby Fajardo resort, where the crew is staying for the goes wrong as a means of furthering his vision. This is something that's really unusual about him as a director. There is always some measure of improvisation involved in directing a film. But with many directors, this can often feel like compromise. Lav takes whatever conditions are out there and makes it part of his vision.

"Nothing stops Lav," says Paul Soriano. He admits that he wanted to work with Lav partly just to learn from him. "Back in Bulusan, there was a time when it rained in the middle of a scene. When I asked Lav if he was going to do another take, he just told me 'it rains in the world."

As much as Lav has already written, the movie is actually still in flux. He will write new lines at any given moment, changing the shape of his narrative to fit what the world is giving him.

"I tell my guys 'make sure nothing happens to Lav," says Paul Soriano. "No one else knows how to put this movie together"

Though it did not go as expected, the first shot of the day goes relatively smoothly. It is early when Lav and his crew arrive at the parking lot of Las Casas. The resort isn't even technically open yet. They have breakfast first, which turns out to be a bit of a problem. Lav is a vegetarian, and the catering hasn't taken this possibility into account. This is a constant problem for Lav, who gave up meat years ago for health reasons. This is a country that doesn't always seem to grasp the concept of only eating

there, the production forgot one of the actors who were supposed to be in the shot. Pascual and Cruz were there, but the actor playing the boatman was still in Las Casas.

And so the production stayed in Morong for far longer than intended. And soon enough, word gets out that there were big stars hanging around the side of the road. This catches the attention of local government officials, who then come around asking for permits. Lav's cinema is free, but it's becoming clear that this production is not. He has too much weighing him down, and what was supposed to be a little twentyminute diversion soon sets the whole production back four hours.

Four hours lost would be a headache for any production. But this seems especially dire for this film. Again, they are running up against a deadline with Pascual, who has to head back to Manila the next day for a recording. They are also running up against the deal with Las Casas. They're only supposed to be shooting there until 10 p.m. They've got other actors expecting to get their scenes in that night. They've only got Ely Buendia and Angel Aquino for that night as well. They've got dozens of extras waiting impatiently in costume, including a bunch of non-professionals from the Spanish embassy and Instituto Cervantes who did not sign up for an overnight excursion.

Later, more bad news arrives. Carlos Celdran, who was cast in a vital role, has just sent word that he's not coming. And for the first time in the shoot, Lav Diaz loses his

cool. He talks about how Carlos was bragging about having already memorized all the Spanish lines. He doesn't quite sound as angry as he really ought to be, but this is as irate as the usually serene Lav Diaz gets. Still, it doesn't derail the production. One of the extras from the Spanish embassy is cast in Celdran's role, and the shoot rolls on.

The night stretches on. Lav just barrels through the 10 p.m. deadline, hoping that Las Casas won't get on their case. The resort is surprisingly accommodating, only voicing their concern that the production might disturb some of the guests. The crew is exhausted, many of them hiding out in the corners of the century-old house where the scene is taking place. The extras are restless. They've been waiting around for far too long to get their camera time.

Lav, however, is keeping it together. He doesn't show any signs of being tired. He is cracking jokes and keeping everyone's energy up. He doesn't show frustration when an already lengthy take goes wrong. Despite all his efforts, however, the shoot still ends at 3 a.m., and there's no hiding how things just haven't been going according to plan.

iolo Pascual is supposed to be leaving, but he's sticking around for a bit longer. He wants to get all his scenes in. He fought for this role, after all. "I taught *Noli Me Tangere* in high school," he says. "I memorized the whole book."

"When I was told that I was playing Simoun, I knew I had to do it."

"I'm staying. I'd regret it if I didn't stay."
And so he stays. The production gets as much out of him as they can. They head out into the wilderness to have him and Cruz trade lines from Rizal's *Mi Ultimo Adios*.

The camera rolls and it is easy enough to forget that the production is desperately behind, that there are over twelve hours of shooting left to be done. The scene is beautiful, Manda's frame a perfectly composed portrait of emotion. Diaz's visual style, which is mainly composed of long, still frames, may seem overly simple at first glance. But there is never a detail out of place, no one section of the frame that doesn't contribute to the depth of feeling in any given scene.

His style was born of necessity. With no access to expensive film stock, Lav, years ago, had to reassess what he could get out of an image. Video afforded him the freedom to just roll, to explore the limits of cinema as a temporal experience. The absurd focal lengths afforded by digital filmmaking allowed him to open up the frame, to start scenes from great distances. Whereas other filmmakers were trying to make video look as much like film as possible, Lav was much more interested in what made the format

"I don't like limits," he says. "I don't like the idea that there is a set way of telling stories, and that's what we have to do."

unique. And years of refinement have produced this particular aesthetic, which is unlike anything out there.

"It's been amazing working with him," says Paul Soriano. "He gets so much out of one setup and one take. It's really making me reconsider the way I shoot things."

Pascual does end up having to leave. There are still scenes with Simoun left to be shot, but Lav thinks they can get away with using a stand-in. Dany, the film's Australian special makeup effects artist, dons Simoun's suit and plays Pascual for the rest of the day.

The rest of the day goes on relatively drama-free. A sudden downpour threatens to delay shooting further, but Lav just shoots right through the storm. The resulting footage feels like it could be from a big budget action film; an action film that just happens to be set in 19th century Manila. Later, more actors arrive to play small parts. They are forced to wait around as Lav tries to get other scenes done, and while they grow impatient, they seem to understand the situation.

It is nearly 6 a.m. when Lav gets around to shooting his last scene in Las Casas. He is surprised to find that most of the female bit players have decided to go home. And so Lav pulls together every female member of the production staff and puts in costume to fill out the crowd in what is supposed to be a lively scene set in Binondo. Everyone is tired. Throughout the night, one could see random crew members splayed on various surfaces on the cobblestone streets of Las Casas, trying to steal little bits of sleep here and there.

But not Lav. Never Lav. Right up to the last shot, he's trading good-natured barbs with the crew. If his shoulder has been bothering him, he hasn't been letting on. He, of all the people working on this film, is probably in the most pain. He's probably gotten the least sleep. And he's the one who has given the most of himself over to the project. This is a project that he's wanted to do since the last millennium. And now, finally given the resources to complete it, the last two days turn out to be an ordeal. But he's the one at the end of the day still standing, still smiling in spite of it all.

There is a mythology of Lav Diaz, and most of it is true. He is indeed a wander-

ing genius who pulls inspiration out of the air, traveling on a whim to find stories in strange places. He is an artist who has set himself free, who can appropriate nature to fit his narratives. He is a man with a profound relationship to the history of this sad republic, at times seemingly able to have conversations with long lost heroes, harnessing their words for his own stories. He is also the lone filmmaker in the country that can offer the people who work with him reasonable working hours and a full night's rest.

But the legend is contingent on Lav Diaz being free, on carrying little on his back. And there is no question what value having these stars and these resources bring to this film. There is no question that he is now able to put together amazing sequences only made possible by the involvement of all these people, all of them drawn to the legend of Lav Diaz. And there is almost no doubt that the film will turn out all right, that it will be, in the end, another great Lav Diaz film.

When asked about how different these last two days were, Lav is apologetic. He repeats what he said in Starbucks just a few days back. He wouldn't regularly work like this. He doesn't want to tire people out. But working with mainstream actors comes at a price. You have to meet them halfway, adjust to accommodate their busy schedules.

The last two days of shooting are an education. Not even the legendary Lav Diaz can quite get around the realities of this industry. He is working miracles within this context, crafting stories that defy every convention set by decades of mainstream study. But there are moments when it doesn't really feel like Lav Diaz is as free as he wants to be. As free as he usually is.

Tired, battered, lacking sleep, Lav Diaz calls cut for the last time on this production. The day finally ends as the sun rises over Bataan. The ordeal of the last two days is finally over, half a day later than planned. Lav Diaz will try to get some sleep. Hopefully, his shoulder won't bother him too much. And he will return to Manila to assemble the pieces that came out of his struggle. He will use it all. He will find the story within this story. He will continue to build the legend, even from the days when it was put into doubt.



### This is the story of a poem,

written by a fugitive and unwittingly published by the very people hunting him. The story takes place during one of the most tumultuous periods in our national history—it is therefore a complex one, with

# Lacaba acrostic brazenly agitates nitwits.

## BY PAOLO ENRICO MELENDEZ

a degree of subjectivity to its beginning and end. Today it is the stuff of literary lore—cunning trumps censure—and like many legendary accounts, it is polished now from all the reverent handling.

One version of this story has us begin in 1973, a year after Proclamation 1081 was announced, placing the entire country under martial law, to the relief of citizens desperate for discipline. Crime was on the wane; peace was prime. Manila mornings were bright under Ferdinand Marcos's Bagong Lipunan, the reverent, mannerly new order keeping at bay the country's negative elements: hippies and pinkoes

looking to make trouble, godless and lawless and just plain gross. At night, the city curled up under curfew with a justified willingness; if you were out late at night. After all, weren't you up to no good?

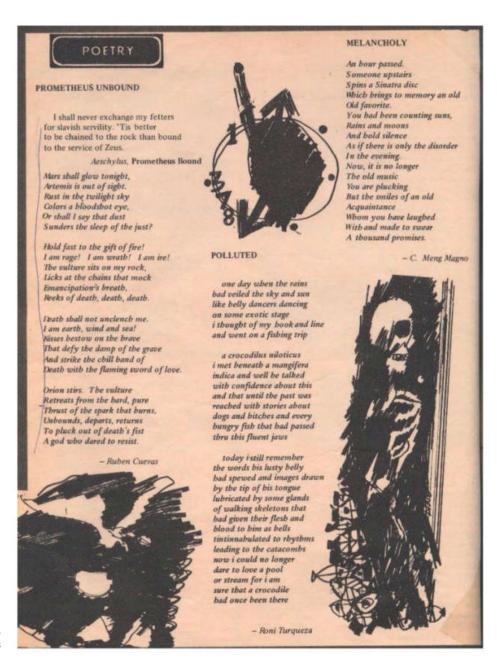
There was no opposition party to rock the boat, no independent judicial body to hamper the now free wheels of justice. Even the media muckrakers were in the sewers with the filth. Proper writers wrote for the government now, in proper consultancy positions, with the Army Office of Civil Relations making sure their work aligned with the Bagong Lipunan vision, from title to final full stop.

Which was exactly how state-allied editors found the poem "Prometheus Unbound". Written by one Ruben Cuevas and published by Focus Magazine, it was the myth of Prometheus picked up where it left off. His avian tormentors about him, the titan finally escapes from the chains that bind him. Prometheus the populist, triumphant in the freedom previously denied him as the patron of craftsmen, the giver of fire to mortals.

With a classic motif, a po-

litically moderate subject, elaborate rhyming couplés, and iambs as martial as goose steps in the grandstand, "Prometheus Unbound" represented all that was estimable under Marcosian poetics, the literary equivalent of crew cut hair and home by 21:00.

Sometime later, however, Focus staff were alerted to an alarming thing: "Prometheus Unbound" turned out to be an acrostic, in which the first letters of each line, when read downwards, spelled out a message different from that of the rest of the poem. The magazine's editor-in-chief was summoned for a reprimand by the press secretary himself as some sources recall; the literary editor was promptly sacked. The identity of Ruben Cuevas was investigated. And men in uniform rushed from newsstand to newsstand, pulling any remaining copies of Focus, that Mar-



"Prometheus Unbound," in Focus, July 14, 1973

cos-allied publication which now carried the opposition's favorite slogan, chanted and printed alike at lighting rallies and on contraband manifestos, "Marcos Hitler Diktador Tuta".

### THE SWITCH

Our story's other version has us begin on January, 1970. Students and activists in Manila and the country's other urban areas were protesting a myriad of issues, from rights civil and human to women and worker. They decried the encroachment of the United States on the Philippines as a colonial influence, the continuing manipulation by a small oligarchy of the country's political and eco-

nomic affairs. Tensions rose, and in what is now known as the First Quarter Storm, clashes between protesters and the constabulary began in earnest.

At the front lines was a journalist named Jose Maria Flores Lacaba, known simply as Pete. The eldest of six children, Lacaba is Cagayan de Oro-born and Pateros-raised. A fan of local radio, Tagalog komiks, and the weekly Balagtasan, Lacaba's class consciousness was tempered at an early age as a disadvantaged scholar surrounded by the rich students of Ateneo de Manila-a school he was forced to drop out of when his finances finally gave. "I was just 19 when I started writing

for the Free Press, handling culture and the arts," he recounts to Esquire. It was the only job available to someone without a college degree. The brutal dispersals he witnessed in the skirmishes of January 26 and 30 edged Lacaba ever closer to a critical stance against the regime and the system it perpetuated. A younger brother, Emmanuel, known to friends and family as Eman, would share with the elder Lacaba this political coming of age.

"In 1971, I began to take an active role in union organizing. When we lost our union's certification election, the whole Free Press staff resigned en masse." Lacaba, along with

Free Press veterans Nick Joaquin and Gregorio Brillantes, started a new magazine, the Asia Philippines Reader. "We did our best to be balanced, but becoming politicized was unavoidable, especially after the Plaza Miranda incident," in which a Liberal Party campaign rally was bombed, killing nine and injuring 95 others.

Shortly after martial law was declared, Lacaba heard from relatives that a military unit had been looking for him at their family home in Pateros, a lucky break brought about by outdated intelligence, for Lacaba had since moved to Quezon City. Knowing that he was now a hunted man, Lacaba joined







Clockwise from far left: Lacaba after release, Lacaba (third from right) before capture, Nick Joaquin and Pete Lacaba at Malacañang

the underground press.

"Our publication was called Taliba ng Bayan," he says. It began as a monthly, mimeographed publication before the staff eventually found a sympathetic printing press. As a wanted man, Lacaba's movements were limited to the Taliba's various underground houses—his younger colleagues, mostly members of the College Editors Guild of the Philippines, served as stringers.

At length, one of these stringers told Lacaba that The Varsitarian, the student paper of the University of Santo Tomas, was interested in publishing his work, as long as it wasn't too radical.

"I thought about writing

an acrostic, as I had written some of those before, for girls," he laughs. "A lot of anti-government acrostics were being published at the time too, in Tagalog. So I decided to do the same." Still on the move from one underground house to another, Lacaba composed "Prometheus Unbound".

# GAME WITH HIGH STAKES

The poem makes multiple references, primarily the plays of Greek tragedian Aeschylus and English Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. "I also wanted to refer to the famous painting by [Flemish artist] Peter Paul Rubens, hence my choice

of pen name." Cuevas, on the other hand, was Lacaba's nod to the Philippine folk hero Bernardo Carpio, himself a titan, cursed by a shaman to be wedged under the mountains of Montalban, whose mere shrug of his mighty shoulders caused the earth to shake, and whose freedom will coincide with the liberation of the Filipino race.

"Laro lang," Lacaba says of the poem's composition. "The first line is a pun on 'Martial Law tonight'. And Mars isn't even a Greek god," he laughs.

Lacaba understood the risks that came with publishing the poem, however. Martial Law, after all, was just a little over a year old, and fear hung heavy in the air like a firearm's report in the small of dawn. When Lacaba sent the poem to The Varsitarian, he told the stringer to make the acrostic clear to the publication's editors.

"The editors backed out," Lacaba says. "That's when I thought to send it to Focus. If memory serves, they were the only government-sanctioned magazine publishing literary works at the time. At nakalusot naman."

# WHAT PRICE, FREEDOM

In April of 1974, Lacaba was finally captured, and was held at Camp Crame where he was routinely tortured. When his

childhood pulmonary tuberculosis recurred, he was confined under heavy guard. He joined many other writers imprisoned by the state in camps all over the country, political captives whose biggest crime was to assume the responsibility of check and balance in a subdued society, who had absolutely no recourse for release while the writ of habeas corpus was suspended. They included Bienvenido Lumbera, Jose Y. Dalisay Jr., Ricardo Lee, Lilia Quindoza, Ed Maranan, Luis Teodoro, and Ninotchka Rosca, among many others. The list is long- and shameful.

That same year, Pete was visited by his younger brother, Eman, by then a celebrated poet himself. "Hindi na ako makakadalaw." Eman said to Pete, who understood at once that his younger brother was about to go underground as

Lacaba was set free in 1976, after the intercession of Nick Joaquin, who had made the release a condition following his acceptance of the National Artist award. "As Nick told it, he approached [Juan Ponce] Enrile during the awards ceremony. While they were talking, Marcos overheard them, and assured them of my release. Sure enough, two days after, I was summoned by the head of the constabulary, Fidel Ramos," Lacaba says. Lacaba was given a conditional release; he was required to report weekly to Camp Crame as proof that he was still above ground and in Manila. "And if I wanted to write, it had to be apolitical."

It was during the meeting with Ramos that Lacaba was asked if he was related to a certain Manuel Lacaba, who was currently missing in Davao. "I told Ramos that there are many Lacabas in Mindanao. Pero alam ko nang si Eman iyon." Eman was later found with three others in a shallow grave, his dead body bound and bearing signs of both summary execution and post-mortem mistreatment. His face was so disfigured that his mother would not have recognized him if not for his unique cluster of moles. One of Pete's first acts as a free man, therefore, was to wait for the corpse of his murdered brother.

### **FETTERS OVER** SERVILITY

There are a number of ways to end this story as well. One is to recount that Lacaba moved on to write one master-crafted movie after another, most sounding off on social injustice at varying volumes. His screenwriting credits include Jaguar, Boatman, and Sister Stella L. Lacaba has written other seminal poems, as well, such as the seriously droll "Ang Pagkain ng Paksiw na Ayungin," which walks the reader through a serving of sour broth fish.

Lacaba finally admitted to having written "Prometheus Unbound", but well after Marcos was overthrown and Corazon Aquino took over. In that new, just, and free space, celebrated globally as the triumph of democratic will over ruthless suppression, Lacaba teamed with the formidable Lino Brocka to make Orapronobis. It is an emotional cauldron of a film, depicting a post-Marcos life in which change is slow to come for those on the fringes of Philippine society. *Orapronobis* was promptly censored. It was never commercially screened while Aquino was president. And Lacaba will never write another English poem.

Another way to end this story is to note that "Prometheus Unbound" is one of the earliest, and in the context of legal media, among the most resounding, psychological defeats ever handed to Ferdinand Marcos and his regime under Martial Law. Ruben Cuevas/Pete Lacaba and "Prometheus Unbound" prove that the dictator is fallible, his goons myopic, their strength and balance wanting on the uneven ground upon which a propaganda war is always waged.

"Prometheus Unbound" is a proud part of a century-old tradition of Philippine protest writing, which critics call the literature of circumvention. The practice goes back to the Propaganda Movement during the latter part of Spanish rule in the late 19th century, through the American Commonwealth era, and directly leads to the late Sixties and the early Seventies with the rise of activism, up to the present. It is a tradi-

"PROMETHEUS **UNBOUND" IS ONE** OF THE EARLIEST, AND IN THE CONTEXT OF LEGAL MEDIA, AMONG THE MOST RESOUNDING, **PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFEATS EVER HANDED TO** FERDINAND MARCOS AND HIS REGIME UNDER MARTIAL LAW.

tion of wit and irony, allusion and allegory, satire and spoof: the go-to weapons in the arsenal of the unarmed.

"Prometheus Unbound" joins Bonifacio's "Pag-ibig sa Tinubuang Lupa" and Mabini's "Perlas Kong Mahal," Claro M. Recto's scorching nationalist polemics. The poem is in great recent company, too, from Linda Ty Casper's novel "Wings of Stone", which recounts the events that follow Ninoy Aquino's Assassination; Jose Dalisay's "Killing Time in a Warm Place", a fictionalized account of activism during the Martial Law years; to F. Sionil Jose's "Viajero", an allegory of a society in crisis. Great company that forms one unbroken line, from Jess Santiago in 1970s, Bobby Balingit of The Wuds in 1990s, to the more recent firebrands of Einstein Chakras. The list is long, and, in the vibrant colloquial in which protest literature is spoken, agit. 🛂



# Strange Bedfellows: A Martial Law Love Story

They were on the opposite sides of history—she was from a family of high-ranking Communists, he was the head guard of President Marcos. Divided by political beliefs, they never should have been together. **Aurora Almendral** recounts the story of how Irwin Ver and her mother, Gemma Nemenzo, found love in the time of exile.

Portraits by Jason Quibilan

# Her adulthood began the day Martial Law was declared, when she turned the corner onto her street, and saw military trucks pulled up to her driveway.

was a child when Marcos fell, but I was old enough to perceive evil. I knew he was the reason why my father became a guerilla commander for the New People's Army and had a bullet lodged in his left thigh. Why his entire squad was buried in an unmarked grave outside a village in the Cordilleras. The years of Marcos's Martial Law saw my uncle, Dodong Nemenzo, an outspoken academic and a high-ranking Communist, captured and imprisoned. Marcos was the reason why my cousin, Fidel, was shot through the chest by a soldier during a rally, and why nameless guests-rebels of the undergrounddisappeared, eternally, after leaving our house. I grew up knowing that some of these people were tortured.

On February 25, 1986, I was home with the mumps. Across town, flocks of yellow confetti fluttered through the air and scattered over the thousands of people who had taken to the streets to celebrate the fall of Ferdinand Marcos. My mother, Gemma Nemenzo, was outside Camp Crame, celebrating. Soldiers defected to the elated crowds, dropping their rifles in solidarity with the people. They were shocked when a television screen showed Ferdinand Marcos taking the oath of office -but it was his final act as president of the Philippines. The oath was interrupted when rebels took over the last of the pro-Marcos TV stations, and his farcical speech went to black. "It was euphoric," my mother said.

The same day, Colonel Irwin Ver, head of the presidential guard, favored son of General Fabian Ver, Marcos's most loyal aide and Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, was at Malacañang Palace. Irwin saluted Marcos, who was still dressed in the barong he wore for the cameras. Despite the oathtaking performance, Marcos seemed to have already accepted defeat. Irwin had not. Our position is still defensible, Irwin reported, ready to fight off an attack from

the rebels. "No," Marcos said. He did not want to kill his own people. Irwin recalled seeing the sadness in Marcos's eyes, and for a moment he feared that he himself might cry.

Irwin and my mother watched the same history unfold from opposing vantage points, but 25 years later, they are married, and the events that led up to the fall of Marcos still come up often in the house they share today in California.

My mother, a journalist, was at the frontline of the revolution. When the Reform Army Movement RAM, took over the Department of Defense, in the act that set off the military coup that eventually took down Marcos, she was holed up there with Ramos and Enrile, bracing for an attack.

Years earlier, at the height of Marcos's power, my mother fell in love with my father. Elementary school classmates, they met again at the prison hospital. Fresh from a firefight with government forces, he was shot in the leg, captured by soldiers, and was recuperating at Camp Crame before being placed on indefinite detention at the high-security Youth Rehabilitation Center, or YRC at Fort Bonifacio, where many captured rebels were held. For the three years while he was in prison, my mother and father's relationship played out in handwritten letters, fervent with love for each other, politics and freedom. When he was released, they got married and raised me and my brother to be defiant, egalitarian, full of stories about eating beetles to survive in the mountains. Theirs was the story of the revolution, and their marriage didn't last much longer after

My mother doesn't consider herself an activist, but for nine years, from the age of 23 until she was 32, she lived in close proximity to the violent edge of Martial Law. Journalists were relegated to covering celebrities, Imelda's newest building, the quiet order in Manila. Anything but the

biggest story of the era: the government's forceful rule over the country. Friends were interrogated for writing critical stories about the government. People she knew, including her brother Dodong and his wife Princess, were arrested and detained. Stories of torture and disappearances circulated. They demonized Marcos. She was angry when her nephew, Fidel, was shot through the chest by a soldier during a rally, and angry when she heard news of friends killed.

Her adulthood began the day Martial Law was declared, on September 21,1972. My mother stood outside the padlocked gates of ABS-CBN, where she worked. Marcos had muzzled the media and she was, by default, fired. When she turned the corner onto her street, and saw military trucks pulled up to her driveway. Soldiers in full gear had their armalites trained at the windows. The battle lines were drawn that day, and the guns were pointed at her people.

By contrast, Irwin was in Washington D.C. training at the International Police Academy. He was a lieutenant at the beginning of his military career. When he saw Marcos on a TV news feed declaring Martial Law, he was shocked. As a soldier, he didn't know what would be asked of him. He called his father, "What should I do, what should we do now that there's Martial Law?"

He became the head of the Presidential Guards, a post his own father had vacated to become Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Along with Irwin's brothers, Rex, who was close-in security to the president and Wyrlo, who headed the tank division of the Philippine Security Command, the Ver family, with the secretive and infamously loyal General Ver at the helm, formed a military dynasty whose power was understood to be synonymous with the Marcoses'.

On February 25, 1986, while my mother was celebrating in the streets, Irwin, along

with the Marcoses, were on the grounds of Malacañang Palace, stunned at the events that led to a pair of American helicopters descending on the lawn to airlift them out of their seat of power.

Irwin believed the helicopters would take them directly to Paoay, to establish a separate Marcos government in their home province of Ilocos Norte. Instead they landed at Clark Air Force base. At 2 a.m., scattered on the furniture of a guest barracks, the Marcos and Ver families were woken and ushered onto the tarmac. The Marcoses, Danding Cojuangco and his family climbed into a jet, and the rest of the party into the bare hull of a U.S. military C130. The floors of the plane were worn plywood, with exposed metal rafters. There was a deafening roar. Irwin clasped his hand over the ears of his twomonth-old son. Realization settled slowly. When 45 minutes passed and the plane had not landed in Paoay, Irwin thought perhaps they changed course to Taiwan. Three and half hours later when the plane landed and he read the painted sign of Guam International airport, he realized they'd been heading over the Pacific into American territory. The tanks, firearms and loyal soldiers he'd arranged would not be needed. He finally understood. They were refugees.

"I asked him a bad question at the time," Irwin said, "Paanong nangyari, ito, Dad?"

For six months, Irwin continued to train, putting on a white T-shirt and a pair of borrowed U.S. Army sweatpants, and ran the ridge of a Hawaiian mountain. He had never meant to leave the Philippines, and in Hawaii, he became a soldier without an army.

Irwin wrote letters to Ramos and Enrile hoping to salvage his military career. The valedictorian of his class at the Philippine Military Academy, Irwin accepted that he could not return to the position he left behind, but hoped for a quiet professorship at his alma mater. No one answered his



letters. Instead, Irwin and his entire family were stripped of their Philippine passports and barred from returning to the country.

In the accounting of misdeeds after the fall of Marcos, General Ver was associated with the corruption that came with unfettered power-and his sons have inherited an on-going case for plunder. But no money was at play in their life in the U.S. Irwin's first dozen jobs were menial, evidence of the depth of his fall and his desperation. He mowed lawns for milk money. When he saw laborers trimming trees by the side of the road, he asked for a job and worked alongside them, shimmyng up trees with a chainsaw to trim errant limbs. His brother Wyrlo, former head of the tank division of the Presidential Security Command, became a hotel security guard. As the family joke

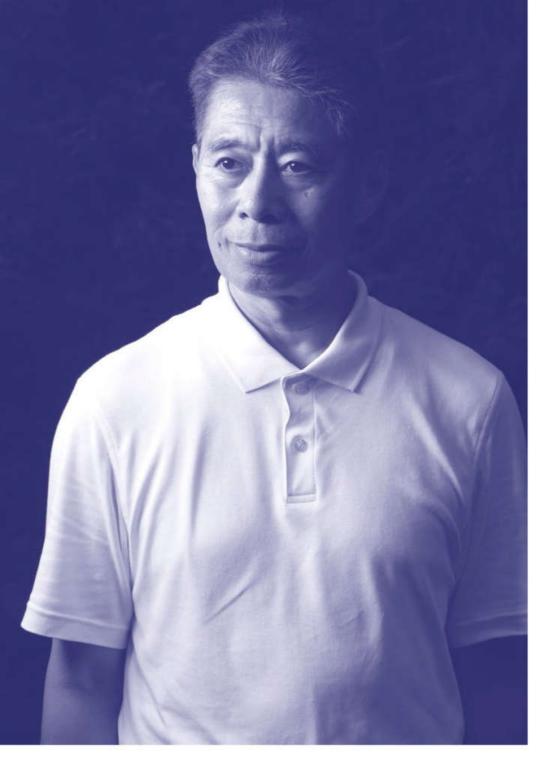
goes: Dad naman, sabihin mo na kung saan nakatago yung gold bullion. Hirap na hirap na kami dito, they'd say with a laugh.

General Ver became the fall guy for the Marcoses. He went into hiding and spent his life on the run, using fake passports and assumed identities, in part because he could not afford defense lawyers for the cases the American and Philippine governments



were mounting against him. He died without seeing his family again.

hen my mother first met Irwin, it was 1985. She and Marites Vitug were interviewing him for Mr. & Ms. Magazine. Still at the height of his power, they conferred upon him the sins of the Marcos dictatorship,



and they were scared, nervous. "We believed our own propaganda," my mother told me

The next time they met was in California, 18 years later at a UP High School reunion. My mother, who still held some latent belief that as a Ver, Irwin was a monster, was immediately fascinated. After the fall of Marcos, she had written books and articles on the heroes of the revolution, and on the changing Philippines. History is written by the victors, and she had never heard Irwin's side. When the night wound down, she and Irwin exchanged email addresses and continued their conversation in a long volley of messages. Both divorced, when they arranged a date at a restaurant in North Berkeley. They talked for seven hours. They were bound together by the past, but time and displacement gave them perspective.

As a son, Irwin is loyal to his father's memory and defends his reputation. He's more likely to emphasize the sunnier sides of the Marcos dictatorship than my mother. He knows there were many regrettable abuses of power at the lower levels of government, but insists that Marcos never ordered foot soldiers to commit arrests, torture, and disappearances. "It felt like a war situation, a combat situation. We were both on the offensive and the defensive. It is not uncommon that would happen," said Irwin, "that some soldiers would act on their own."

During a visit to Manila last June, I asked him if he thought the long years of Martial Law were justified, given that history now understands the communist threat to have been exaggerated. He stands by the initial reasons. "You'll have to ask your Uncle Dodong whether he thought they were capable of capturing the government," he said with a laugh. Then he reminded me that they really don't get enough credit for keeping the Communist threat at bay. With the fall of Vietnam and the war in Korea, the military thought that the Philippines was on the brink of falling to Communism.

Twenty minutes later, my mother burst into my room. "You know I have to correct something that Irwin said. I keep telling him. He thinks Martial Law kept the Communist threat down, but really they were their best recruiter." I write it in my notebook. It's the sort of argument they have that wakes up us kids—me, my brother and sister, and Irwin's two sons, Bien and Irwin, Jr.—on Sunday mornings during family vacations.

ugust 21, 1983. The day that Ninoy Aquino was shot, my mother was in Manila, caught up in the grief and confusion that followed. Irwin was in his family quarters in Malacañang Park. He had stayed home with his infant son who had a fever instead of going to a planned golf game at Villamor Air Base, a coincidence that saved him from becoming a more prominent suspect in speculation about who killed Ninoy Aquino. He was watching TV when his father barged into his quarters dressed in pambahay, to tell him something had happened at the airport.

"If he knew that something like that would happen," Irwin said, to me, to my mother, to my mother's friends and family, to everyone who has asked him, "he would have been in uniform. He would have been at his office, monitoring the situation. But he was as shocked as the rest of us. No, I don't think he was involved."

Irwin believes his father did find out, but he took the knowledge to his grave. "It's better you don't know," General Ver told him, "You're still in your military career."

When General Ver died in Bangkok in 1998, Irwin was in California and had to appeal to then-President Estrada to waive the executive order placed by President

# He understood this was the role he played in Philippine history. The one in which he loses everything.

Cory Aquino to bar his family's return. Irwin was allowed to enter the Philippines for the first time, to attend his father's funeral.

Irwin told me the story as we were driving through his hometown of Sarrat earlier this year. As soon as he got off the plane in Manila, he was ushered into a press conference.

"Do you think your father will be buried at Libingyan ng mga Bayani?"

Irwin ducked, anticipating the follow-up question about his father, who went down in history as a national villain, "That's the usual burial place of soldiers."

"Do you think your father was a hero?"

"I told them, 'He was a military man who served his country," and then he added, "The next day we were lambasted by the media! Your mother's friends!"

Irwin laughed, as he always does. He is not bitter. And this I do not understand. "If you look at history," he told me, "regimes always fall. The people wanted a different leader. We were part of that change. That regular change." He understood this was the role he played in Philippine history. The one in which he loses everything.

y mother, when she first

started seeing Irwin, was nervous about introducing him to her family. The Communists, in the military narrative, were the enemy. On a recent family party, he leaned arm to arm with my aunt, Princess Nemenzo, giggling like imps about god knows what. He sends a text to Gringo Honasan to thank him for the Bicol Express he sent over for the party, ribbing him about the spice, "Is this your revenge?" People expect that if Irwin were to be bitter towards anyone it would be Gringo Honasan.

"If there was combat and we were on different sides, we'd probably shoot at each other. On a professional basis," he stressed. They've never had to do that, and despite the fact that Gringo led the coup that took Irwin down, they're friends now, and go out for a coffee or breakfast when Irwin visits Manila. "I know him as a person."

June 2014, Irwin and my mother stood

on a California mountaintop, flurries of snow catching in their hair. After more than ten years together, Irwin and my mother decided to elope.

I was always fascinated by Irwin's ability to face the people most aggrieved during the Marcos dictatorship. "Were you worried about your family?" I asked. "Did they ever say anything?"

"I was not worried, but I never told them about your mom until it was too late for them to stop me." The situation, he knew, was delicate, but being forced to confront their relationship may have hastened acceptance on both sides, that the Marcos years were in fact in the past.

"You see, Ja," my stepfather explains to me, using my childhood nickname, "I hope you get the idea now, I'm not antagonistic to people who have different views, opposing views to mine. I respect that everyone has a way of looking at life, of how we should run our government."

rwin told me that when he met my mother's friends they went in for the joke: "Hey, why are you sleeping with the enemy?" I understand that to some of them, I am the enemy, but I don't think of them that way." He was more concerned that they would feel uncomfortable having him around.

When Marites Vitug met him again, decades after their interview across a desk in Malacañang Palace, the person she saw wasn't the formal, coolly intelligent man she remembered. "Oh my god, he's such a gentle soul!" Marites told me. In a humbler setting, out of power and working a regular job, "He becomes very human," she said.

Watching my strong-willed mother interact with Irwin, Marites told me how she and another journalist friend, Cris Yabes, warned my mother in a feigned disbelief, "Gemma, you're ordering around the former PSG commander!"

"It's the soldier in him," I joked, "he's still following orders."

Fit and with a strong sense of propriety and tradition, Irwin's past life as a soldier seeps into his current one. When the whole family gets together on Christmas, he organizes the trip to midnight mass with military precision. One day, locked out of their house, I called Irwin at work and he detailed an ingenious seven-step process of up-turned rocks, hidden rope pulleys and windows rigged to slide open just wide enough to slip a hand through and retrieve a spare key. Any would-be robbers were assuredly thwarted, and by the time I got into the house, I felt like James Bond, had all of his assignments involved solving quotidian domestic snags.

At their home in California, Irwin and my mother are just as likely to argue about Bongbong Marcos's political prospects, as to fret about when their children will finally settle down to get married, or deliver excited updates about a potted vine that sprouted a six-foot-long tendril overnight. Irwin dotes on his bonsai garden in a room full of my mother's books. Some evenings they put on a CD and glide around the smooth wooden floors Irwin installed in their living room, the better to twirl my mother around in. They hold hands as they walk down the street, and he tells her stories of his childhood hijinks, just to make her giggle.

Their wedding party in Manila was attended mostly by my mother's friends and family, Victor Corpus, Gringo Honasan, her brother Dodong Nemenzo, Marites Vitug, and Amick Alfafara, a cousin who worked on the Agrava Commission. "We were trying to protect the country," he told us in his speech, "and I know now that you were trying to make it better." Then they danced.

When I ask him if part of what attracted him to my mother was a path to redemption, a chance to defend his father, his side to her friends and family, who were most affected by it, he laughs. "I can hardly even convince your mother! No, that doesn't factor into it at all. It's really because I love her. We don't understand why other people don't understand."

### BY JEROME GOMEZ

Proclamation No. 1081 didn't mean a damn thing to an elite few during the '70s. With money to burn and curfew passes issued by the Malacañang, the rich and connected continued to live their lives of high style and hedonism. Esquire boogie-oogie-oogies back in time to an era when designers ruled, drugs were de rigeur, and *bongga* was the word of the day.















Muhammad Ali in Malacañang wearing a barong Pierre Cardin-style—collar towering, sleeves flaring, his enormity causing a puckering here and there in the tapered garment—his face sneering at Joe Frazier, the guy he will TKO at the Big Dome days later.

The ex-war photographer Slim Aarons snapping the venerable aristocrats and various celebrities being flown in—aboard a private Learjet, but of course-by the affable and incredibly loaded PAL president Beni Toda into his Hermana Mayor, his own private island off Zambales, a tropical hideaway reminiscent of la dolce vita, Capri style. Did we wink or are the Marcos kids no longer kids? Bong just arrived from Oxford and is considering taking up an MBA or just staying in town and getting into "serious work." ("Everything's still up in the air," he tells Jullie Daza's magazine, People). Imee's appearing in a Filipino production of Trojan Women at the Manila Metropolitan Theater (she's playing Andromache, Tony Mabesa is directing). And the youngest, Irene, is driving around Wack Wack in a golf cart, with her father as passenger-the amateur golfer who never missed a day of the Philippine-hosted 25th World Cup. What about Imelda? Don't look now but she's building a disco right inside her own home, which just happens to be the highest office in the

If I snap my fingers and say Martial Law, what would you remember?

People talked in Taglish or swardspeak and everyone was bongga and nobody believed the kiyeme and everyone was looking for a "happening." It was fashionable to ride the Love Bus if your Chedeng didn't arrive. You had your eye on the ball but also at the illustrious crowd watching the Toyota versus Crispa championship at the Araneta. Blow-drying was all the rage with women; and for the men, shiny, satin shirts, unbuttoned to the navel. (Remember

Jay Ilagan and Mat Ranillo III in *Salawahan*? Well, you probably don't because nobody saw it when it opened in theaters in 1979.) Meanwhile in Bacolod, in the heart of the sugar plantations, *hacienderos* were literally burning money to light up their cigarettes in the *sabungan*. *Anong* say *mo*?

For an entirely different demographic, the Philippines was a scintillating playground for international celebrities and various aristocrats during those years of PC raids and warrant-less arrests. For the moneyed set, Manila was a small town, albeit a town more cosmopolitan than any of its Asian neighbors, more glamorous and in step with the world. Everyone knew everyone. "You enter a club and you know the sister of this, and the brother of that. It was one big happy family," says Louie Cruz, son of the former ambassador to Britain, J.V., Louie cut a name for himself later on in the post-Marcos years with his off-the-shoulder blouses and snazzy articles for the Manila Chronicle, before lording it over one of the most successful clubs Manila has known, Giraffe at 6750 in Makati. In those days-during the '70s of course-he was just one of the kids partying at Where Else? Louie Y's super club deeply ensconced in the thennewly minted Hotel Intercontinental. When a break from the local scene is in order, Hong Kong is the default destination for shopping; and for nightlife, the kids of the privileged live it up in the clubs of New York, Paris, and London. "The Elizabeth Arden route," Louie calls it, referencing the ubiquitous tagline of the famous perfume bottle. They all went to 54 and Le Cirque and Le Jardin and they all knew each other—and knew just the right person to call. Doors swung open for them in the hottest clubs in the world where they ordered champagne, always champagne, not because its sosyal but because, well, that's what they liked. "We had common interests and standards," recalls Louie. "It was an international scene but speaking the same language."

As JACKIE O DID WHEN SHE WAS FIRST LADY, Imelda Marcos dictated that language. "The standards were so high—in art, in clothes, in





Nights in bright satin. Fashion patroness Chito Madrigal with then boyfriend Manoling Collantes at Coco Banana. Right: Wolfie Bierlien as The Great Gatsby with his Daisy played by Marilou Prieto. Opposite page: Larry Leviste as Josephine Baker with Leo Khan as Toulouse Lautrec at Coco's Legends Party.

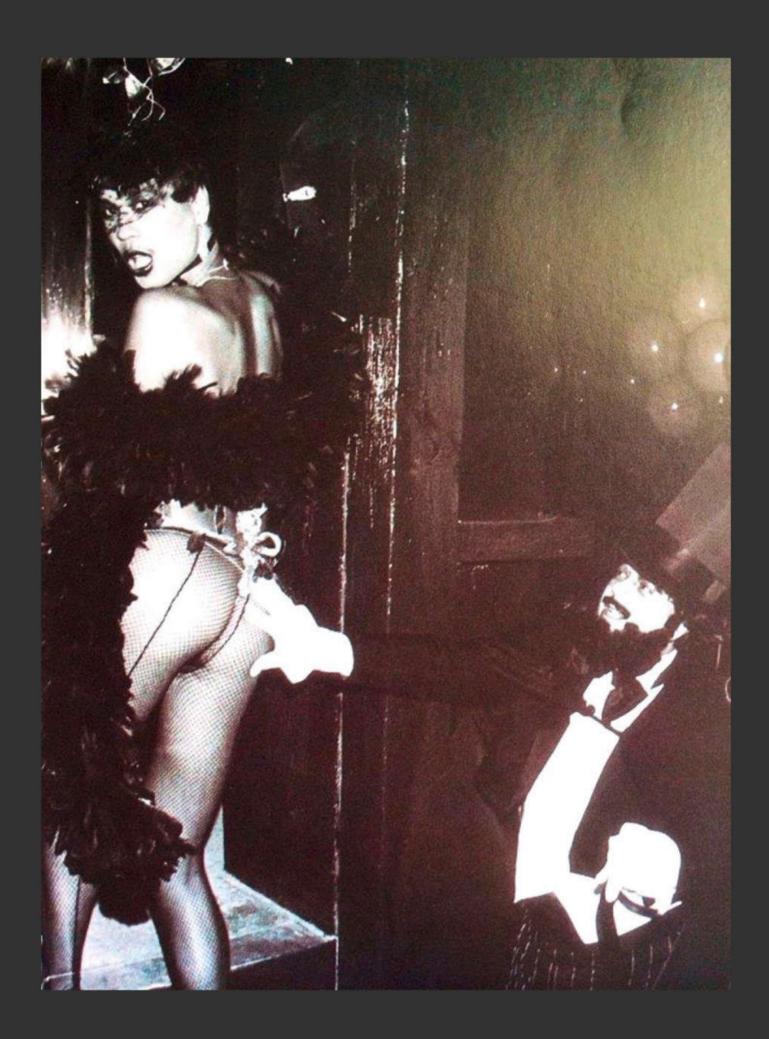
music; and entertainment," recalls Louie. Apart from inviting the likes of Van Cliburn and Paul Williams to Malacañang, she invited the best local talents to perform in the palace. Word has it that if you're a favorite, you are also invited to simply grab what you can from a drawer stacked with cash as soon as your singing duties are over. But I digress.

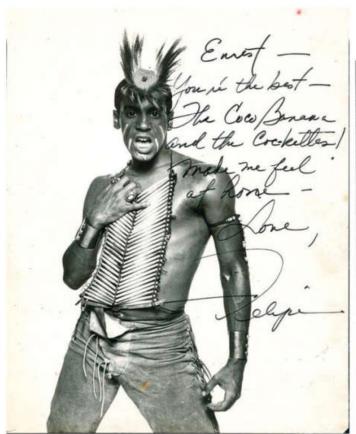
The barrage of foreign guests arriving in town necessitated top-brass hospitality, hence the rise of the five-star hotels which didn't only compete for foreign currency but for peso-paying clients, and which outdid each other-or to use a term in those days, paistaran—with the most strambotic (another word from that era) fashion shows. The hotels didn't only change the city's skyline but ushered in a completely new lifestyle. Suddenly, it was no longer that fashionable for the ladies to have their three-hour lunches with just food and society chatter at Nora Daza's Au Bon Vivant. The action was happening at hotel ballrooms where lunch came with a show-the day's top models sashaving in the latest

fashions from the country's top designers as soon as dessert was over. If hotel lounge singers had what they called, puwesto, so did the couturiers. The Hilton boasted regular shows by the more senior fashion minds like Pitoy Moreno and Ben Farrales. Hyatt had Gary Flores, Auggie Cordero, Rusty Lopez, and Ernest Santiago. There was Boy Saulog at the Philippine Village, and Tower Hotel had Oskar Atendido. If there were luncheon fashion shows, the evenings offered galas. Fifty to seventypiece collections that were immediately snapped up by the donyas in attendance, the better to have something to wear at the next event-of which Manila wasn't lacking. "The peso was very strong and people believed in Filipino fashion designers," recalls Lorenzo Leviste who was a very young designer at that time. "All the Asians came here! I would have clients from Hong Kong and they'd buy anything that you had just because walang kamukha-kasi pangfashion show!"

The designers therefore were the celebrities of the time, their parties and shows

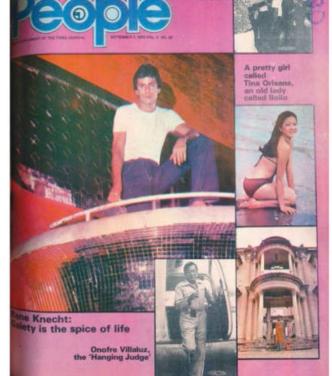
and travels well documented in the few publications that existed. The young Inno Sotto-then called Guam Boy-had a show advertised in the papers as "strictly for the 400" but attracted much, much less of his declared target audience. Ben Farrales's 47th birthday shebang at the Hyatt's La Concha clocked in 150 guests that included society swan Chona Kasten, actress Pilar Pilapil, and Mother China herself, Lily Monteverde, the movie producer, who came with favorite director Joey Gosiengfiao and favorite fortune teller who went by the name of Dolly Khinbu. And who can forget the perennially costumed Helena Guerrero's Friday the 13th birthday party where she had the entire Fiesta Carnival to herself, with her usual cohorts of eccentrics and elitists swirling about in roller skates? "The chicest, wackiest circus birthday party to go down in the annals of fest history," reported People. At the Budjiwara hair show, did you notice Chito Vijandre and Bobby Novenario weren't speaking to each other? Whatever, they will all end up at Coco come Saturday night.











It took a village. Clockwise from top left: a signed picture from Village People's Felipe Rose; a typical house party of La Salle Greenhills kids; society women, like Imelda Ongsiako Cojuangco, sat for a portrait by Rupert Jacinto (this one appeared on the cover of People); Rene Knecht announcing the opening of Gaiety in the social chronicler of the time, People Magazine. Top photos (and photos on next spread) courtesy of LORENZO LEVISTE. Magazine scans from the Lopez Museum and Library.

# "Disco was our church."

As the society scene moved out from the dinner soirees in the residences of Forbes and Dasma, so did the society mavens that hosted them. Disco was causing a major explosion in the major capitals of the world, coinciding with the explosion of the gay lifestyle, and Manila was not to be left out. As Leviste puts it, "The ladies wanted to see the gays, the gays wanted to see the boys, and the boys wanted to see the chicks." Hence, sightings of Mary Prieto and Chito Madrigal rubbing elbows with Eddie Garcia and Elizabeth Oropesa at Coco Banana. Chito Madrigal being proposed marriage to one evening by the diplomat Manoling Collantes in the same club. Among the younger group, there was Cristina Valdez arriving in full Eliza Doolittle regalia in one Coco party.

Over the top was de riguer, and bongga always encouraged. And nowhere was this thinking more prevalent than in Coco Banana, the epicenter of cool and chic and glamorous, the scene of the most extravagantly imagined parties of the day: a Chinoiserie fete, a white-themed party inspired by L'Uomo Vogue, a carousel party. At any given night there would be a group of muscular men carrying a lady dressed as Cleopatra, mannequins painted with street graffiti, vintage clothing hanging from copper wires, a throng of elves (made up of some of the staff of the nearby Hobbit House). "Parang Midsummer Night's Dream araw-araw," a regular once put it. Ernest Santiago's version of Studio 54 never put its address in any of the club's collaterals, because, as its tagline proudly declared, "The World Knows Where We Are." And the world did find its way. The Village People's Indian-costumed member Felipe Rose who fell in love with the Manila scene, Linda "Wonder Woman" Carter who wore a Coco Banana shirt when she landed the cover of Time. Even Francis Ford Coppola had gotten in touch with Ernest then-the director was shooting Apocalypse Now in the Philippines-and had inquired if the club could possibly accommodate the movie's cast and crew.

Over at Where Else?, the Marcos kids were leading the 12-step on the dance floor—a series of 12 different movements as the group face north and south and east and west of the club's mirrored walls. "Manila partied under different kingdoms dur-

ing those days," Leviste adds. "The Coco Banana kingdom, which was headed by Ernest and Bobby Caballero and myself as the daughter. The Malacañang group of sila Bongbong and Bong Daza and Louie Ysmael, with their beautiful girlfriends." There was the flock headed by the fabulous German, Wolfie Bierline who would throw the wildest parties as if he were the Great Gatsby. "Once he had these obese women walking down his staircase singing "Bakit Ako Mahihiya?"" And then there's Helena Guerrero's group, which was all about over the top costumes. People stayed in the clubs up to four in the morning, unless of course you had a curfew pass-then you can actually move from one discotheque to

"Martial law was happening just as disco was exploding all over the world," Leviste says. "And so disco was our church, disco was our gym! Dancing all night and taking poppers, partying! That was our exercise, our gymnasium, and we would sleep the whole day."

There were no drug problems in the '70s. There were just drugs, and plenty of them. The purest. From friends who've just flown in abroad—and there was always someone flying in from somewhere. There was one party in New York where the Filipina hostess greeted her guests with a "welcome" spelled out in cocaine on the console table. There was one December party in Manila when a Christmas tree arrived decorated with marijuana joints and other such mood enhancers.

"[There were] very pure drugs, pharmaceuticals they were downers which were actually tranquilizers, Quaaludes," shares Leviste. "The ingredient was methaqualone which would make you numb so para kang zombie, you'd be fighting it and that was the bangag, fighting the numbing sensation. Madrax mixed with coke—which would bring you up. If you took both of them you would be in what you would call 'on a speedball.' Upper and downer. Your mind and eye and mouth are on coke, and your body was very relaxed and ready for sex. You would lose all inhibitions."

Those inclined would bring their *baon* to the clubs (Santiago raised his *taray* eyebrow to anyone seen drug-dealing at Coco), and everything's for sharing. You could always tap into someone's generous

heart and they would gladly put a tablet of Q on your tongue. Louie Cruz would want to see you swallow it, though, he told me years ago when I wrote a story on the club for *Metro Society*. "Because he might want to take it in his own time, but you're there to get high *sabay*."

Sex was no biggie then. There was the pill, after all. And syphilis and gonorrhea were as curable as a hangover. As Louie Cruz puts it, the scene was "like one big Peyton Place."

"People had sex every night," says Larry. "In Where Else?, at the poolside. In 54, in the balcony upstairs. Instead *na uuwi pa, mag-*sex *na lang sa tabi-tabi tas balik sa* dance floor!

"Sex was not an emotional thing, it was like you played a round of tennis and then you shook hands. You sweated and you say, 'See you sometime!' It was not promiscuous, it was innocent."

Preparing to go out was as much of a fantastical ritual as the going itself. Think Tony Manero spiffing himself up for a night on the town in Saturday Night Fever which came out in 1978. The men all wore the same cologne, wore Fred Perry shirts and Nik-nik tops which were available at Cartimar. As for the girls, they would have their clothes made by Gaupo or Christian or Rusty, their hair blown and their faces made up at Budjiwara. Friends would call each other to meet up early so they can rehearse their dance steps. Rehearsals are followed by dinner in some nice restaurant and then off they go to Stargazer or the handsome cosmopolite Rene Knecht's Gaiety, whose pre-opening buzz involved such promises as being the biggest dance club in Southeast Asia. Outfitted in red velvet, the club could accommodate 1000 disco freaks at a time, and would be cooled by no less than 90 tons of air-conditioning.

By the time 1978 rolled in, the glass doors of the disco in Malacañang were flung open, and Imelda would invite her Blue Ladies and select guests from her exceedingly formal dinners and waltzes at the Maharlika Hall—then always decked with the freshest flowers, arranged by the famous Ronnie Laing—to come up to the new, mirror-walled, third floor dance hall which had a view of the Pasig River. Sean Connery partied here, along with Ma-







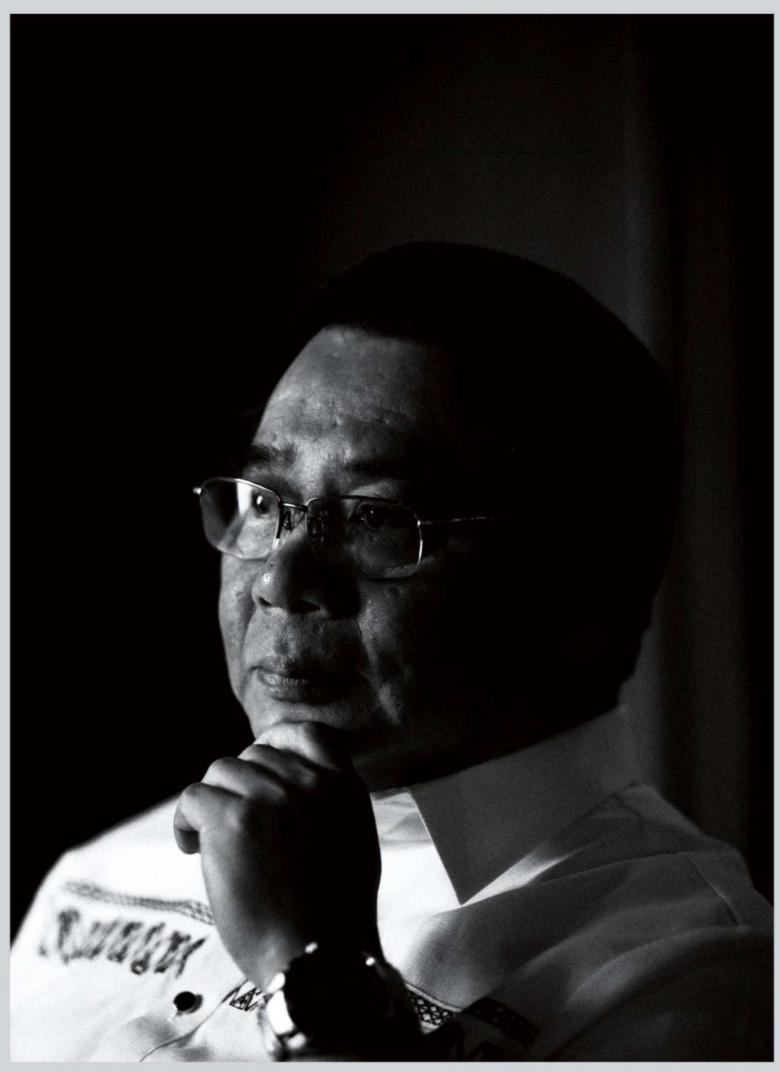
They loved the nightlife. Clockwise from top: Helena Guerrero as Madame Butterfly (behind her model Gina Leviste as Margot Fonteyn); actor Eddie Garcia, then fashion show producer Becky Garcia, and Jullie Daza, editor of People Magazine; Menchu Menchaca in Auggie Cordero. Opposite page: Tetta Agustin, who was then already modeling for Givenchy and Saint Laurent, with Rusty Lopez who made her dress.

dame's usual cocktail of international VIPs: Doris Duke, Christina Ford, the Agnellis, and Henry Kissinger. Should a change of pace be in order, she entertained in her seaside hideaway in Olot, her hometown. At one time she flew in a batallion of models and designers from her Bagong Anyo crew for a weekend to provide amusement for her foreign guests via a fashion show. The Olot property was a kingdom in itself: it had a dance hall, a swimming pool, several interlocking pavilions and beautiful bungalow-style guesthouses. It sounds like a perfect venue to entertain, except for that time when Imelda, in her Hanae Mori, espied the lawn and found the grass too dry and not green enough; so she had it spray painted, causing a slimy disaster on the hemlines of the models' gowns.

Precisely when all these wildness and craziness came to a halt, no one knows for sure. Even Ernest Santiago, when he was still alive, couldn't quite recall the exact day or month or even year when he decided to close the Coco Banana doors forever. Louie Cruz tells me, if you want to know when a certain era ended, you have to know the plague of its time. Which, for the

veteran party observer, was the AIDS scare abroad reaching Philippine shores and throwing the proverbial wet blanket to a decade of spirited bacchanalia. The lifting of Martial Law had nothing to do with its demise. Just like the proclamation of Martial Law altered nothing in the lifestyles of the can-affords. The rich have always been the rich, and therefore moved in a world different from the rabble. Who cares about the dregs of the city that peopled Bernie's Manila By Night? Who cared about the plantation workers of Behn's Sakada? Were you at Ernest's Mad Hatter's Party at Coco? The guests arrived at 8:30 p.m., only to find out the doors were still locked. They had to wait an hour! "I wanted to hold their anxiety, build up a mob and then open the gates. Drama! Suspense! Like a movie. Anyway I [had] what they came for!" Mang Ben is off again to another of his pre-gala show sojourns to Hongkong to find inspiration, while Fe Panlilio just arrived from her Roman holiday with news that femininity is back in fashion, and so is the slit. Valentino just launched the video disco! And so now you can watch the Bee Gees and Donna Summer and Chic and Gloria Gaynor perform on the screen while you're swinging on the dance floor. You have to come armed and ready for the next dinner invitation; they might just play charades-the "in" icebreaker for the "class" set-and you might find yourself battling it out with perennial champs Arturo and Tessie Luz. Anyway, there will always be some gypsy-type invited among the throng, ready to provide a side amusement of card readings and some such astrological kiyeme. Like Turiya, who in one suburban gathering very gamely dispensed advice on how to attract positive vibes: "Take your shoes off. Sit by the pool. Water is good for the soul... Look up to the sky... Hmmm those stars are divine... Do eat almonds, they're very good for you. Lettuce is delicious with bagoong. Didn't you know?" It was a time of camaraderie and of curiosity and exploring possibilities-which should be a lot when you're affluent and connected to power. As one of the doyennes of the era, Elvira Manahan, she of the extravagant laughter and highly polished style, replied to People Magazine when asked what could she still want the most when she already has everything: "Everything!" Bongga. 🛂





### What I've Learned

# **Neri Colmenares**

### Congressman, Human Rights Lawyer

Interviewed by Erwin Romulo Photographed by Jake Verzosa

IF YOU'RE IN A POSITION OF POWER OR WEALTH, never abuse and never be arrogant.

### THE SECOND LESSON MY FATHER TOLD ME,

"Kung tama ka naman, tindigan mo. Pero kung mali ka, dapat aminin mo." That's why I could be very brave in speaking out against something which I think is right, but I have no problem in admitting if I make a mistake.

IN A MARTIAL LAW SITUATION, there's no dialogue. Either shut up or you go to jail.

### INITIALLY, I DIDN'T MIND MARTIAL LAW.

I was in grade 6 when it was declared. *Pansin ko lang, walang pasok! Ganda ng* Martial Law! (*laughs*)

MY ANTAGONISM TO MARTIAL LAW STARTED FROM PERSONAL TEENAGER INTERESTS. Sabi ko, this is not a life I want to live! Uuwi ka ng alas onse, may gusto ka pang ligawan, hindi mo na maligawan. Ang sama-sama ng buhay pero 'pag basahin mo ang dyaryo, parang ang ganda-ganda ng buhay.

[THE] STUDENT CATHOLIC ACTION TAUGHT US THAT PEOPLE HAVE RIGHTS. I began to be critical of the human rights record of the Marcos Administration.

### THERE WAS A CRACKDOWN ON THE CHURCH.

The military arrested a lot of people from the church. *Naalala ko pa yon*, social workers ng Share and Care, postulate for poor settlers, Student Catholic Action, urban poor... *Siguro mga* 13, 14 *kami*.

ANG GINAWA NILA, PINALABAS NILA ITONG SI DON TO MEET ME, so nagkita kami ni Don near the cathedral. Sabi ko, "O, Don, kamusta?" Sabi niya, "Neri, hinuli ako eh." "Bakit naman?" Eh syempre, the usual charges, you know, you're a rebel... Sabi niya, "Pinalabas

lang ako para hulihin ka rin." Sabi ko, "Ha?" "Oo, paglabas mo rito, huhulihin ka rin." Sabi niya, "Wag kang mag-panic ha."

PAGTAWID KO SA KALSADA, kita ko na 'yong traditional na military dati—yong malaking tiyan, may flash bang, naka-sunglass, naghihintay sa akin. But look at this, when they arrested me, sabi nila, "O, Neri, may itatanong lang kami sa 'yo. Wag kang pumalag ha." Hindi na 'ko pumalag. They hailed a taxi and then they put me there and then dinala ako sa headquarters.

### THEY'RE GOING TO [MAKE YOU] DISAPPEAR—

walang warrant of arrest, ki-kidnap-in ka lang—but they're hailing a public utility vehicle. That's how impunity was during Martial Law. Hindi sila takot na may taxi driver, it doesn't matter if the taxi driver witnesses that. Walang problema 'yon. So dinala ako sa headquarters. Mabuti naman dinala ako sa headquarters, I was thinking, kung dalhin nila 'ko somewhere else baka mamamatay ako eh, safehouse or torture chamber... At least kung headquarters, inisip ko, public official 'yan.

THE FIRST THING THE MILITARY DOES to you when they torture you is to destroy your self-confidence and humiliate you. *Wala munang* physical, to make you think *na*, "*Kami ang* in power *dito*. You are a nobody."

THERE WAS THIS LIEUTENANT, I remember, may riding crop pa siya. Sabi niya, "Hindi totoo yong confession mo. Kainin mo yan." Pinakain sa 'kin 'yong sinulatan ko. Buti na lang at the time uso 'yong onion skin. Matagal ko rin nakain 'yon ah, siguro mga 45 minutes, kasi iisa-isahin mo rin, mahirap eh kahit onion skin. Pagkatapos noong kain, bibigyan ka ulit. Syempre, nag-isip ka na ngayon, "Anong isusulat ko dito na hindi ko kakainin?" Kaya lang, wala ka naman ginawang masama eh. You tell the truth.

At the time, I was so young, I thought I was dreaming. Sabi ko, "This couldn't really be true. Ano bang ginawa kong masama? Did I steal? Did I kill? I was 18 years old. So shocking yan for an 18-year-old kid 'di ba?

Ang Isang Ginawa nila doon sa akin, may sofa, nakaupo ka pero meron silang kuryente, parang cattle prod, na bubugbugin ka nila dito. 'Di parang nakukuryente ka 'di ba? Ang tendency mo tatayo, kasi gusto mong tumakas. Doon sa harap mo, may naghihintay na susuntok talaga sa'yo...

And PHYSICAL TORTURE, there comes a time when you reach a threshold siguro, where, na-numb ka na eh, masakit pero that's it. Wala nang isasakit pa, 'di ba? Pero ang mental torture, grabe talaga, that's something you will never forget. Ako nga, di ko na maalala 'yung mga suntok-suntok. Yong mental torture 'yon 'yong grabe, it was really well done.

### ISANG MENTAL TORTURE PA NA NAALALA KO,

isang gabi, kinuha rin ako. Lasing 'tong intelligence officer, malaking mama. "Are you lucky?" sabi niya sa akin. "You think you're lucky?" Umi-ingles. Tahimik lang ako siyempre. Meron siyang malaking revolver. Kinuha niya lahat ng bala, Russian roulette. "Tignan nga natin if you're lucky," sabi niya.

### PAG SA LOOB PALA NG BUNGANGA MO [ANG BARIL],

parang ang lakas ng pakiramdam ko akala ko pumutok. I could feel my brain splattered on the wall. *Grabe 'to ah*. Drain na drain talaga ako dun, 'yun talaga you'll never forget that.

Ang Masama pa, inulit niya pa. Sabi niya "He's very lucky, o sige sige, tignan nga natin kung pwede pa." Inulit niya. Noong second na putok talagang, wala na eh, di na

Isang gabi, kinuha rin ako. Lasing 'tong intelligence officer, malaking mama. "Are you lucky?" sabi niya sa akin. "You think you're lucky?" ...Tahimik lang ako siyempre. Meron siyang malaking revolver. Kinuha niya lahat ng bala, Russian roulette. "Tingnan nga natin if you're lucky," sabi niya.

ako... Dalawang beses [akong] namatay sa isang gabi. He never asked me a question. He was just torturing for torture's sake.

I THINK TORTURE IS LIKE 'yung rape sa babae. Rape, sabi nila, is not about sex, it's about power. 'Yan ang torture. Sometimes it's not even the intelligence information they want to get from you. It's just the fact that they have the power over your life, or your death. And that gives them the feeling of being a god.

I think the main thing that really made me survive was the fact that I knew that what I was doing was right. I was not ashamed that I was in prison. In fact, I was proud. It's a badge of honor to be arrested for asserting your rights and for defending the rights of others.

REMEMBER MOST OF US WERE CHURCH WORKERS, so nobody blamed God for that. In fact, I've seen many of my *kasama sa loob na na-strengthen pa nga ang faith nila.* Everybody blamed Marcos and the US. The torture manual of the US, I saw years later, very similar *doon sa* torture method. Nobody blamed God. We believed it was Marcos and the US.

AFTER MY FIRST ARREST, I didn't want to go back to activism. Na-trauma ako eh, sabi ko, I don't want to suffer that again. Pero sinusundan-sundan ako ng military. At that time, every time I walked, tumitingin ako sa side mirror ng mga kotse. 'Pag naglalakad ako, parating may mga sumusunod... When I go to sleep, 'yong bintana ko sinasara ko kasi baka may magtapon ng granada. For a 19-year-old, I was really weird.

[WHEN NINOY DIED I WAS IN] prison in the north, in [a PC camp] in the Ilocos Region. '83 yon diba? So August yon. Sabi namin, "Naku, baka hindi tayo ma-release nito!" Tapos narinig namin na later on, lumalaki yong mga rallies. Ah 'eto na, this is it, 'eto na yon.

AFTER I GRADUATED FROM LAW SCHOOL, a professor of mine, Alfredo Tadiar, asked me to help him in his work as chairman of

the National Amnesty Commission. "May mga applications dito sa akin." He told me. "Tignan mo what you think, are they okay or not okay, kasi lawyer ka." May isa doon na lumapit sa akin. He was half paralyzed, 'yong mukha niya bagsak, parang na-stroke. Naka-tsinelas, bedraggled. Sabi niya, "Sir, hihingi sana po ako ng tulong kasi RAM-SFPYOU ako. Ngayon natanggal po ako sa serbisyo. Eh mahirap po ang buhay, nastroke ako. Hindi ko makuha pension ko. So sana ma-grant ako ng amnesty para naman makuha ko yong pension ko. Kasi ang hirap na ng buhay." Sabi ko, "Sige." Pamilyar, sabi ko, pamilyar to ah. "O, anong pangalan mo?" Sabi niya, "George Yap." Then I remembered. He was the Russian Roulette.

ALAM MO, HINDI KO MAALALA ang pangalan ng mga physical [torturers], marami sila eh, but George Yap will always be [remembered]. 'Yong sinasabi ko kaninang walang hatred, wala naman talaga. Pero 'yong isang kaibigan kong kasama ko ring nakulong, dalawa kaming nag-reserve na, "Yang George Yap, 'yan ang may personal hatred tayo. Hindi talaga 'yan papatawarin." But [it had] been what, 20 years? So sabi ko, si George pala 'to... tuloy lang. Pin-rocess ko yong application niya kasi ibibigay ko sa chairman eh, kay Professor Tadiar.

SABI KO [kay George Yap], "Nakulong ako dyan dati eh." "Ha talaga, sir? Nakulong ka? Kailan?" Sabi ko, "1978? Kasama ko si..." Nagbanggit ako ng mga kasama kong nakulong, the more famous. Kasi I was 18 years old, I was not as famous as the others, yong iba 25 years old, sila 'yong sikat... Naalaala niya. Putlang-putla talaga siya... "Ikaw pala yon, sir?" Sabi ko, "Oo, naalala mo 'di ba?" Sabi niya, "Oo, sir." Putlang-putla talaga siya. Sabi ko, "Alam mo, yong application mo kay Chairman Tadiar on the merits, hindi ko na papakialaman. You will be decided by the chairman on the basis of your merits. Wala akong sasabihin sa kanya na huwag. You argue your case. You will be decided." Sabi niya, "Salamat, sir. Thank you." Umalis na siya. And I did not even intervene and say to the chairman, "Eh malay mo, baka RAM-SFPYOU nga naman siya." So he left and he was granted amnesty.

### HE HELD SWAY OVER MY LIFE 20 YEARS AGO.

Now, naka-tsinelas, tinatawag niya akong "sir," but I didn't assert my power to hold sway over his life. So siguro 'yon naman ang lesson doon sa kanya. In fact, sa kanya bumalik. And I think grabeng penalty na rin sa kanya in the end, paralyzed siya.

THERE'S NOTHING GOOD that I can say about Martial Law.

MARCOS MISINTERPRETED that the Divine Trinity means concentrating the three powers of government in one man.

MAYBE HITLER DID SOMETHING RIGHT in his life. Maybe the Nazis did something good, but all of that will be dwarfed by the horrible violations of their time.

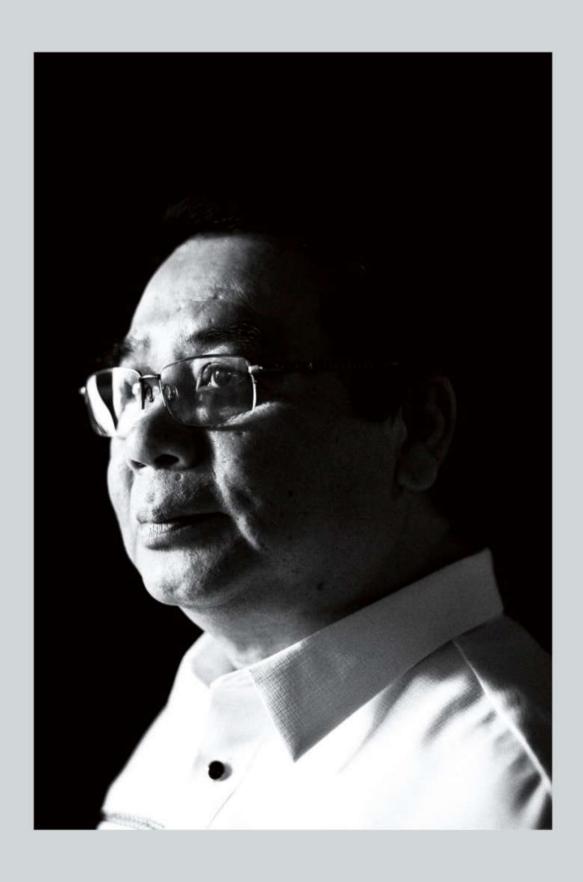
PEOPLE SOMETIMES COME UP TO ME and say, "Di ka ba nagsasawa, napapagod, nanghihina?" Sabi ko, "Physically, mapapagod ka rin eh. You can only take so much. Pero hindi talaga ako magsasawa dito."

Ang TULOY KO DYAN basically rests on two basic principles na pinanghahawakan ko. The first is trust. Trust in the capacity of the Filipino people to change their destiny. That the Filipino people will know that, [eternal poverty is not their fate.] This corruption, violation of rights, this is not forever.

May trust ako d'yan sa capacity ng mamamayan. Otherwise, kung wala kang tiwala sa mamamayan, eh di wala na, magabroad na lang tayong lahat.

THE MOMENT YOU HAVE THE TRUST in the people, in their capacity to reform this society, you cannot help but go on to the second and inevitable principle: hope. The moment you trust, you begin to hope.

In the end, ang ibig ko lang sabihin, we will continue to do this because not only will we believe that we are right, but we will also believe that the people will win in the end.





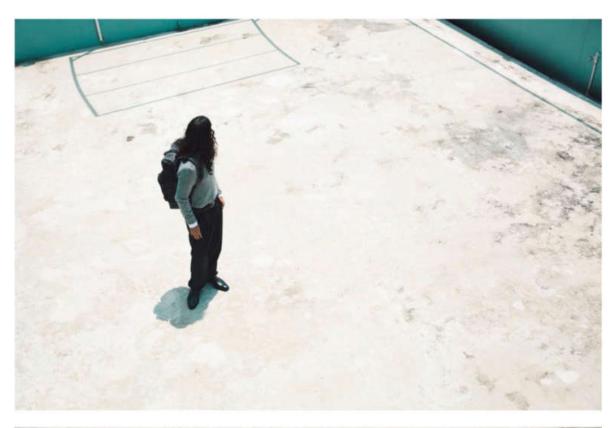












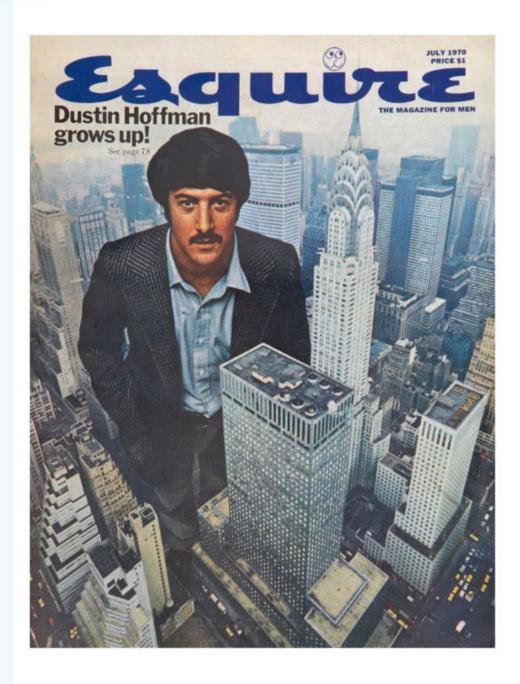


Sweater, shirt, pants, and shoes by H&M; belt (P2,895) by Nautica; bag by Tumi.





MODEL AMRIT MELWANI GROOMING MURIEL VEGA PEREZ INTERN ALYANA CABRAL SHOT ON LOCATION AT M SUITES, 1015 METROPOLITAN AVENUE, MAKATI SEPTEMBER 2015 • ESQUIRE 143



# **June** 1970

**BY LUIS KATIGBAK** 

#### Why put a celebrity on the cover of a magazine?

This has been standard procedure for so long that the question itself consequently seems a strange one. The reasons seem numerous, and closely related: sales, for one thing; advertisers, for another, sheer cultural relevance being a third justification hardly extricable from the other two.

Yet upon examining the stats of even current magazines, these reasons don't always hold up. And a few decades ago George Lois, who designed more classic Esquire covers than anyone else, resisted the standard celebrity cover during his legendary run, and in doing so not only massively raised the magazine's circulation and influence, but helped insure for it an immortality of sorts.

Not that he never used stars: he did, but in startling, thought-provoking ways—Muhammad Ali as martyred saint, Andy Warhol drowning in his own creation. The idea—the insight, if you will—was always more important than the fact of a fanbase. As in his advertising work, for Lois, the covers

were a matter of the right personality with the right context and tagline and moment.

This cover, featuring thenrising star Dustin Hoffman, was about as conventional as Lois' "celebrity" covers got, and half a century later it's still laudable for its visual impact and conceptual playfulness, a testament to the notion that the strongest celebrity covers are the ones where it almost doesn't matter who's on them. Hoffman himself, twenty years after, was to recall erroneously: "Esquire cover?" I was never on an Esquire cover!"



# THE ALL-NEW LEGACY

SLEEKER OUTSIDE, ENLIGHTENING INSIDE.



The all-new Legacy is finally here. Sleeker, more sophisticated in looks with a smooth performance that'll turn heads. But it's the inside that'll keep you excited, our legendary combination of All-Wheel Drive and Boxer engine gives you a smoother, more stable drive on any road condition. The all-new Legacy - looking good, driving even better. Visit our showrooms or email us at enquiryph@motorimage.net to learn more.

SUBARU BOXER



SYMMETRICAL ALL-WHEEL DRIVE

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3-year or 100,000km warranty | Terms and conditions apply | Specifications subject to change















#### A LETTER FROM THE FASHION EDITOR

# Style & Substance

At Esquire, we believe that style must always come with substance. Style should be more than just a question of image. Looking great means more when there is an underlying principle that holds the look together. And so we put focus not only on clothes, but also on the men who make what they wear even better. Take drinks entrepreneur David Ong for example. His passion for coffee and cocktails has perked up Manila. With a couple of establishments under his belt, most notable of which is EDSA Beverage Design Studio, he has enriched the local food and beverage scene. This same passion for style and substance is why we've partnered with Uniqlo. The Japanese brand has found great success around the world with its mission of providing clothes that both please and perform. In the following pages, we present a special collaboration between Esquire and Uniqlo, marking our shared philosophy of creating quality that exudes both style and substance.







Photographed by Artu Nepomuceno; styled by MJ Benitez, assisted by Jaime Abella; hair and make-up by Celest Lavina, produced by Jonty Cruz, with additional art direction by Paulo Santillan



# FOUR CORNERS OF STYLE

LifeWear

THESE ESSENTIAL LOOKS PROVE THAT WHEN IT COMES TO STYLE, YOU MEAN BUSINESS

#### **THE CLOSER**

Serious meetings call for serious style. A solid blazer paired with a strong polo and pants always means business. Navy Easy Care Slim Fit Broadcloth Long Sleeve Shirt, Dark Gray Men's Comfort Jacket, and Navy Genuine Leather Belt, all Uniqlo



#### **TRUE BLUE**

When in doubt, a no-fail classic blue pinstripe polo and navy pants will always set you straight. Easy Care Striped Long Sleeve Shirt and Slim Fit Chino Flat Front Pants, both Uniqlo





#### **WORK OUT**

A strong polo with the right pair of pants allows you to move freely without looking restless. Black Easy Care Slim Fit Broadcloth Long Sleeve Shirt from Uniqlo



#### **CREATIVE CLASS**

A crisp white polo paired with a striped navy sweater is the timeless combination of sharp and simple. Blue Easy Care Oxford Long Sleeve Shirt, Blue Striped Crew Neck Long Sleeve T-shirt, Slim Fit Chino Flat Front Pants, all Uniqlo Esquire CASUAL DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN LAZY.

ENTREPRENEUR DAVID ONG

DEMONSTRATES THE RIGHT MIX OF

SIMPLICITY AND STYLE







LifeWear







#### Preview

# EDITOR'S NOTE

Get your flannel shirts at UNIQLO

An ode to the button-down. It's only fitting that we've partnered with Uniqlo, the Japanese megabrand famous worldwide for its high-quality, low-cost basics, on this month's fashion collaboration. The wardrobe staple, a favorite of our fashion director Daryl Chang,

who styled the proceeding pages, is a building block, a layering piece perfect for dressing up (we love the look of a classic shirt—crisp and buttoned all the way to the top) or dressing down (a no-brainer for casual days—or nights—out with well-fitting jeans, a slouchy tee and the button-down tied haphazardly around the waist, ready to do double duty as a coverup).

We hope this little booklet inspires you to get creative and play around this month. As the weather cools down and we head into the *-ber* months, you'll definitely find many reasons to layer and to dress up (or dress down, as the case may be). Make the button-down your hero piece this season. Get busy stylin' with your favorite ones from Uniqlo.

XOXO, Pauline

Photographed by ROY MACAM Words CHICA VILLARTA Fashion Director DARYL CHANG Art Direction KATRINA VELOSO
Managing Editor ROANA CAPAQUE Copy Editor JAE DE VEYRA PICKRELL Producer PEARL BACASMAS
Makeup ANTHEA BUENO Hair ETHAN DAVID Models JANA STUNTZ and HANNAH LOCSIN
Intern RACHEL ABREU Shoof Assistant GERRIE ANN LOPEZ

UNIQLO is located at SM City Marikina, Robinsons Magnolia, SM City San Lazaro, SM City Lipa, Power Plant Mall, SM Southmall, SM City Santa Rosa, Eastwood City, Gateway Mall, Araneta Center, SM City Rosales, Century City Mall, SM Megamall, Robinson's Place Manila, SM City Clark, SM BF Paranague, SM City Dasmarinas, SM Aura, SM Pampanga, SM City Fairview, Glorietta 5, SM North EDSA, SM MOA



#### LifeWear

# HAPPENS

Two Preview girls, two ways to tackle the classic button-down.



Smart Sleeved

with Jana Stuntz

Look sharp with the skilled suiting of classic button-downs.

ON HANNAH: Shirt; EFC 3/4 sleeve shirt; denim slouch jeans and hat, all UNIQLO. ON JANA: Blue EFC boyfriend long shirt; denim long sleeve dress and off white belt, all UNIQLO





with Hannah Locsin

The button-down shirt is at ease in the company of street wear staples.









#### **BUTTONS UP**

Take a shot at layering your shirts above, below, and against your ensemble.





Printed denim long sleeve shirt; ultra stretch ankle jeans and belt, all UNIQLO





Collegiate dressing gets straight A's with a varsity jacket.

> Varsity jacket and graphic shrt, both UNIQLO



A dainty ribboned top feminizes masculine bottoms.

Printed tie long sleeve shirt, UNIQLO



UNIQLO

Unbutton this flannel shirt 'til below your chest area.

> White long sleeve shirt, UNIQLO





Layer varied flannel on flannel with a common color.

A structured blazer tones down wildcard layering.



Underneath It All We deconstruct layers of structured pieces.



skirt, all UNIQLO



Sweat full zip hooded jacket, Soft jersey jacket, UNIQLO UNIQLO



Striped long sleeve shirt, UNIQLO



# Esquire

# MODERN MAN'S GUIDE TO GROOMING

AN INFORMATI RESOURCE ON MEN'S STYLE AND PERSONAL CARE MASTER TH THE ABSOLUTE INSIDE MANILA'S OF THE PE **GROOMING** MODERN DAY ESSENTIALS BARBERDASHERY SHAVE

# BY MOVING SIDE TO SIDE, SHAVING HAS FINALLY

#### **MOVED FORWARD**







#### FUSION PROGLIDE REBUILT WITH NEW FLEXBALL TECHNOLOGY

A razor that responds to every contour of your face for maximum contact and gets virtually every hair.

versus old Fusion Proglide

# TAKE CARE

Today, more than ever, men are free to attend to themselves without fear of judgment. The modern man cares about what he wears, how clean he is, what he smells like, how he looks in front of the mirror. He gives a damn about presenting himself well, and more importantly, he finally has the tools to do it. Now, it's just a question of how.





SHAVING IS AN INEXTRICABLE PART OF EVERY MAN'S GROOMING ROUTINE, SO MAKE SURE YOU'RE DOING IT RIGHT

## **HOW TO SHAVE**

**NO. 1** 

Splash warm water on your face



This opens up the pores, relaxes the skin and softens whiskers, making it easier to get a close shave.

#### PRO TIP •

"A key trick **[to]** getting a good shave is **[to do it]** straight from the shower or in the shower."

- Marco Katigbak, Felipe & Sons

1

**NO. 2** 



These products moisturize the skin, providing a layer of protection against razor burn and allowing the blade to run more smoothly.

TIPS

#### DON'T PUT TOO MUCH PRESSURE ON THE BLADE! This could

cause cuts and ingrowns. Let the weight of your razor do the work for you. Using short strokes will also reduce pressure on the blade.

#### RINSE YOUR RAZOR BETWEEN STROKES.

A dirty, clogged razor won't cut hair as smoothly and effectively as a clean one.

#### USE PRE-SHAVE

"A pre-shave oil gives glide so that your skin doesn't get irritated with multiple passes," says Marco Katigbak of Felipe & Sons. Layering oil under your shaving foam allows you to run against the grain on the second pass for a closer shave.

If you're growing out a beard and don't want to shave everything off, use a shaving gel instead of cream, so you can see and control how much you shave.



- → **Shave in the same direction** in which your hair is growing. You can determine this by gently rubbing your stubble with your hand or a credit card. The direction in which you encounter the least resistance is with the grain.
- → Shave the tricky areas around the lips last. A little extra time will allow the skin to absorb more product, making it softer and easier to shave.
- Avoid shaving against the grain. This causes the blade to pull the hair up and cut slightly below the skin, which can result in ingrown hair.



#### **GILLETTE SAYS**

Never use a dull or rusty blade! Change your razor regularly—when the indication strip turns from green to white, that's when you know it's time to get a new blade.

It's easy to miss hair in tricky areas such as the jawline and under the chin. Use a handle with a flexible head, not only pivoting back and forth, but moving side to side, so that it can closely respond to the contours of your face.

If you need to shave a second time, wipe your face with a hot towel and apply shaving cream again.

#### A POUND OF CURE

Pre-shave lathers can prevent razor burn, ingrown hair, and bumpy skin. But if they get to you anyway, here are a few fixes for these pesky problems:

#### **RAZOR BURN**

- Use a soothing aftershave balm or lotion. Avoid alcohol-based ones, as these will dry out your skin.
- Once in a while, give your skin a break by skipping a shave.

#### **RASHES**

- Wash your face with a mild cleanser, and use a shaving gel for sensitive skin.
- Avoid heavily scented, alcohol-based aftershaves and colognes.

#### **INGROWN HAIR AND RAZOR BUMPS**

- Use a facial scrub to remove dead skin cells and expose trapped hair.
- Another option for exfoliating the skin is to use products with glycolic acid.

#### **NO.4**

## RINSE WITH COLD WATER

#### NO. 5 Apply aftershave balm or lotion

"The shave is an abrasive process, so it does take off a layer [of skin]. If you don't moisturize, you'll feel [your skin going dry] that much more. [Aftershave] closes the pores, there's a little bit of in it, it has a cooling effect on the skin"

Marco Katigbak,
 Felipe & Sons





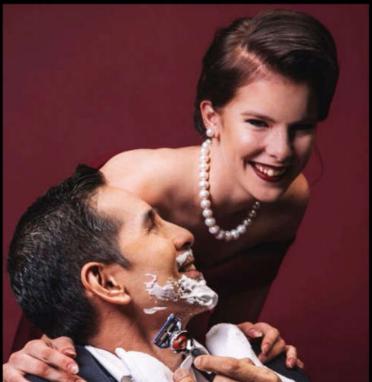






CLEAN CUTS, SHARP SILHOUETTES, AND A TASTEFUL EYE ARE THE KEYS TO CONTEMPORARY STYLE AND GROOMING











For as long as we can remember, shaving has been an important rite of passage; a ritual that men must experience, and eventually practice on a regular basis. And while the technologies and practices have changed and improved over the years, some things stay the same.

## MARCO KATIGBAK

### THE CO-OWNER OF FELIPE & SONS SHARES HIS THOUGHTS ON BARBERSHOPS AND THE ART OF SHAVING.

**Esquire:** How did you guys start with Felipe and Sons? **Marco Katigbak:** We actually started independently from each other. Two of us wanted to do the barbershop, then a third partner, Paulo [Canivel], wanted to do the haberdashery. So for years we were doing the research. Martin [Warren] and I were actively looking for spaces for barbershops and creative concepts since 2011. It took us a couple of years to find a good location. When we did, that's when we partnered up with Paulo. Once we found the location, that's when the concept started coming together. Because it was a big space, we didn't know what to do with it. We thought of combining concepts, so we sat down [together] and six months in, we were rolling. So really it was a collection of dream businesses—café, barbershop, tailoring.

**ESQ:** What got you interested in barbershops and shaving beyond the usual simple routine? **MK:** [Martin and I] were talking dream businesses one day at work, and that's when we started having this conversation about the barbershop. I thought back to how much I enjoyed going to a barbershop when I was a kid. I guess the idea of being in an industry that was all about relaxation, imagining that the end result of the shop is always a happy customer—that appealed to me. And it has so much nostalgia, the barbershop. For so many years it kind of went away. Probably from the 60s [or] 70s, there was just this downturn . . . guys started growing out their hair, and barbershops never really changed much. [They] didn't evolve with the times. Salons grew in popularity because they upgraded their skills, they created a different environment. The idea for Felipe & Sons was to create that experience where it was easy for guys to hang out and come together. The old idea of barbershops where you go with friends or you meet people and you bump into friends that you haven't seen for years. That all appealed to us as the end result.

**ESQ:** How does shaving play into the resurgence of the barbershop?

**MK:** If you think of the staple services of a barbershop, it's a shave. From the earliest days of barbershops or grooming in general, shaving was always a part of it. It's funny, the second oldest profession in the world is barbering. The first is prostitution.

**ESQ:** It seems to me that for most guys, shaving is a chore that they try to get over with.

MK: Yeah, that's true. I would say majority of men complain that they have to shave everyday. Which is where the products of Gillette became revolutionary because they've made shaving easier [to do] at home. With the multi-blade and the replaceable blades, that made it convenient for men, whereas before they were using double-edged razors. So the tools changed to make it convenient but in the barbershop, it stayed traditional. Barbershops still use single-edge razors, hot towels, and the process itself is much more extensive. I guess there's two ways of looking at the shave. There's the way it's done in the barbershop which adds an element of relaxation to it and you can achieve a closer shave. At home, the process is simplified to cater to the busy man who doesn't necessarily have 20 minutes in the morning to shave.

**ESQ:** So what's your shaving routine at home like? **MK:** For me, it's simple actually. Straight from the shower, wet face, a little soap. If you want to be more particular, there are things you can do like oil, aftershave balms, and aftershave lotions, but each guy does it differently. I actually use a Gilette aerosol shave foam. I only do it straight from the shower, otherwise it burts

**ESQ:** So you've never tried to grow out a mustache? **MK:** No, it's weird. It's like eyeglasses. The ones who don't need to wear them want to wear them because it makes them look smart, and I can't grow facial hair even if I tried. I'm one of those guys who wishes I could,



because it gives you a little bit of a bad boy thing. Then you talk about somebody who has facial hair who has to shave everyday and they're like "No, it's a hassle, I wish I didn't have to grow facial hair."

**ESQ:** In your opinion, is shaving still a big coming-of-age thing or is it more ordinary?

**MK:** I think when you're young, probably there's an appeal to it because it's almost like "I'm a man now, I have facial hair now." As time goes on, depending on the guy, it either becomes a hassle or it becomes a part of your style. Some guys pull it off naturally without having to try. They just keep it trimmed, they're comfortable with a little bit of five o'clock shadow, or even a little bit of a beard. Some guys like a clean shave, so really, you can use it as you wish to fit your look. I think the moment that guys start growing their facial hair, especially as kids, when you're in high school, it makes you feel a little bit more grown up, so I guess you could

#### MAJORITY OF MEN HAVE TO SHAVE EVERYDAY. GILLETTE MADE SHAVING EASIER TO DO AT HOME."

say it's like a coming of age thing. I didn't go through it myself but I'm sure there's a joy in it as a father, seeing that your son now has to shave. We have customers who, for the first time, bring their sons to get a shave. So I'm sure in their relationship, that's going to be a moment for life.

**ESQ:** So what do you think are the things that most guys miss or skip out on with shaving that they shouldn't?

**MK:** Well, an optional step is the pre-shave oil, which a lot of men won't use at home because it's oil, so it's greasy—it's an extra step you want to avoid. But using a pre-shave oil makes a big difference in the smoothness of a shave and also the number of passes you make over the skin because it has that protective lubrication that prevents razor burns. I'm sure they skip the hot towels, but a good replacement for a hot towel is a towel soaked in hot water. Or just use hot water itself—a splash of hot water on the face is as good as a hot towel.

**ESQ:** So what does it do exactly?

**MK:** It opens the pores, which makes [for a] more comfortable shave. The water is definitely a necessity. You can't do a shave on dry skin. It's abrasive, it's painful. At least [do] a splash of water. And after-shave balm, those are the most common things that people skip out on.

# THE CUTTING EDGEOF GROOMING

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The precision technology behind the pivot of a razor is critical in shaving and can make a dramatic difference in the quality of a shave. We experienced this first-hand when Gillette introduced the first-ever pivoting razor in 1977.

With FlexBall handle technology, Gillette has rebuilt the shaving experience once again to deliver an entirely new era in motion. FlexBall is a breakthrough handle technology that allows the razor's blades to pivot in multiple directions for precision contact over the contours of the face to change the game when it comes to missed hairs.

#### SHAVING SCIENCE

Gillette has some of the most sophisticated shaving labs in the world, and men expect Gillette to break new ground and to improve the shaving experience. Gillette's research has indicated that missed hairs are a big concern for men. After all, a man's face is all curves and contours, so existing razors lose contact and therefore, miss hairs. That's why Gillette developed the new Fusion ProGlide with FlexBall technology: its 3D motion enables incredible contact over contours of the face to get virtually every hair.



#### FIVE MAIN FEATURES

- The four-way flex movement of FlexBall Technology maximizes the contact of the blades with every curve of a man's face. Instead of having to tilt, stretch, and squint to conform to your razor, the razor conforms to you.
- The razor is also equipped with a Precision Trimmer, which can be used for accurate edging and styling. It helps to reach and deal with hair on the cheek and chin better, resulting in a cleaner, more thorough shave.
- The Gillette Fusion ProGlide FlexBall also boasts Gillette's thinnest, finest blade yet—five times thinner than normal hair. The blade has an advanced, low resistance coating, which enables the blades to cut effortlessly through hair, with less tug and pull. The five sharp blades of the Gillette Fusion ProGlide FlexBall make every shave softer on the skin and much faster.
- The razor's five blades are progressively arranged on a special Stabilizer Bar, which maintains optimal blade spacing for a comfortable shave. It also helps the razor adjust to facial skin, so shaving is a little more like easy, comfortable gliding. Lubrastrips also assist the stabilizer bar in letting the blades move smoothly every time.
- The Gillette Fusion ProGlide FlexBall also has Micro Skin Guard with Snowplow technology. This channels excess shave preparation to help maintain optimal blade contact, stretching the skin for a close, comfortable shave with less friction and less risk of nicks and cuts.



# BY MOVING SIDE TO SIDE, SHAVING HAS FINALLY

#### **MOVED FORWARD**







#### FUSION PROGLIDE REBUILT WITH NEW FLEXBALL TECHNOLOGY

A razor that responds to every contour of your face for maximum contact and gets virtually every hair.

versus old Fusion Proglide